

OCEAN ECHOES

By ARTHUR MASON *with an*
introduction by WILLIAM MCFEE



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OCEAN ECHOES

THE FLYING BOSUN

A MYSTERY OF THE SEA

BY

ARTHUR MASON

New York Post's Literary Review: "It is no imaginary picture. . . . As a story of the sea it ranks with the best of Jack London or Morgan Robertson, and as a story of the uncanny it is comparable with 'Dracula' and 'The Master of Ballantrae.'"

New York Tribune: "A true-blue deep-water story . . . a thing of horror, death and mystery."

New York Times: "Both in theme and handling it betrays a close cousinship to the vivid romances of Morgan Robertson."

Boston Herald: "No lack of exciting action—much of it the sort that is built around the sailor's superstitions."

The Bookman: "The feeling persists that, with the exception of the spiritual phenomena, the whole dramatic voyage actually occurred."

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NEW YORK



THE CALL OF THE SEA HAD ME AGAIN.

OCEAN ECHOES

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

ARTHUR MASON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
WILLIAM McFEE



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1922

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TO

G. W. M.

WHOSE MIDSHIP SPOKE IS EVER
READY TO TACK OR WEAR TO ANY
BIT OF BREEZE FROM NOWHERE



PREFACE

I have been asked to write my biography. Other people have written of their lives, lives of greater value to the world than mine; though possibly mine, too, has not been without value in some little ways. Lives have been written so interesting in the telling, that skeptical readers have condemned them as adorned.

My story is, I believe, not lacking in excitement, but it shall be told simply, and as swiftly and truly as though the years were crossing the paper—crowding, as they have crowded my youth away, and the desire for adventure.

There may be glued leaves in the volume of my life, but I shall steam them apart, trying to piece out a pattern that is not as much smudged as the background would lead one to believe.

There will be in the pattern success and failure; heart-cheer and heart-break, as in all our lives—such philosophy, too, as would result from the thinking my life has led me to do. But

that there is love to the very end, and will be, as long as I live, speaks not so well for me (for if ever anyone knows the rough-and-tumble of life I should know it) as it does for human nature.

Surely I may claim to know people, the good of them and the bad; yet I think loving thoughts, and incline to loving deeds, and I do believe that good is uppermost, and will remain uppermost to the last.

ARTHUR MASON.

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INTRODUCTION

In this autobiography the reader is confronted with a situation sufficiently novel to invite more than a moment's consideration. Here is a man who may be described as a true romantic. At the end of a life devoted to wanderings which took him nowhere and adventures which have gotten him neither fame nor wealth, he sits down to write, convinced that nothing like this had ever happened to a man before.

"And so I yarn along," he says, "and think of past things, and write them down, partly as a sailor who knew all that was hard and rough, and partly as a man recently come to writing who is intoxicated with the new-found use of words to evoke old scenes."

Here is the secret source of his magic. Like the gentleman in the play who finds he has been speaking prose all his life, our author has suddenly perceived that he has been doing the romantic things men write of in books, and the exquisite emotions attendant upon the dis-

covery have had a distinct influence upon his diction. There is an elvish irresponsibility in his narrative that only an Irish sailor could accomplish without foundering. In the early part of the book, indeed, he is continually bewildered by the sharp differences between himself and the conventional Irishman of whom he has heard and read. Yet he perseveres courageously, and soon the stage Irishman is forgotten in the contemplation of his own matchless personality. He is one of those picturesque beings who erupt from the calm surface of literature at long intervals, articulate romantics, like Trelawney with his "Memoirs of a Younger Son," Broome whose "Log of a Rolling Stone" is already forgotten, and even Adam Lindsay Gordon, the Byronic rebel who found solace for his indignant spirit in galloping about the Australian bush. For it should be borne in mind that these romantics are sharply contrasted in mentality with men of the type of Vambery, passionately wandering through Central Asia slaking his thirst for languages and the ultimate roots of human speech; of Burton, the trained traveler who held in contempt the people of his own time and race; of

Speke, the authentic explorer, consumed with a hard, practical rage for annexation, standing with cool insolence before kings, and berating savage despots like children. All these men, in their various ways, were equipped to do their work, as were those more essential builders of empires, Rhodes, Clive and Gordon. They were the masters of their fates in so far as determining their direction could achieve this. They were leaders, and perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of such men in their intercourse with others is their utter inability to permit anyone else to take the lead, no matter how trivial the enterprise.

But the true romantic has no such urge to assume the purple buskins of leadership. There is nothing in him of the old *conquistador* breed, those men who landed upon terrifying coasts, and seem to have had a demon within them, so astounding are the feats of endurance recorded of them. The true romantic wanders as does the gypsy, as did Borrow, but not always with Borrow's command of observed incident and knowledge of the human heart. The true romantic is a Peer Gynt, Emperor of Himself, lord of the

illimitable lost empire of Egomania, condemned to wander in a world of astute swindlers, shrewd executives and a sentimental proletariat. He sees himself always the clear-eyed victim of rascally circumstances, and broods upon the bizarre destiny which condemns him to be forever on the move. Yet of all things he dreads stagnation. The gently shining placidity of bourgeois existence lures him while he struggles desperately to ship once more. He grows pensive as the years pass and find him without hearth and home, outward bound to distant ports where dwell the girls enshrined in the glamour of youthful voyages. He runs away from his ship, and crosses deserts and inland plains in eager hurry to reach a ship. In the streets of heartless cities he sees with luminous clarity the tufted palms waving in the night wind while the riding lights in the harbour twinkle and the guitars twang to soft voices. And you will discover him on any South American water-front, planning a return to some country from which he will immediately depart.

The valuable feature of this book of Adven-

tures is the expression of this mood of the true romantic. Listen to him as he recounts his vicissitudes ashore :

“It was time to commence to build castles, for six months more would give us substantial money. My castle took the form of a cozy little farm, and included a cozy little wife, too, for I was becoming enamoured of a red-haired lassie whose father raised strawberries. She liked me in spite of my clothes and the way I had of talking to my pigs. . . .

“Nevertheless, I kissed her one day through the fence—a barbed wire fence at that—and a thrill went through me, the like of which I had never known before. I began to long for the complementary companionship of her, and I thought of her sharing my days, and bringing my lunch to me at the plow.

“How full of nothingness are dreams! They are but fading specters on a wasteless sea—the closer you sail to them the farther they are away. Two days after my kiss, the hog farm was in mourning. Every last one of the hogs died from hog cholera.”

Here, then, you have the essential value of this extraordinary narrative. It is the work of a true romantic, oblivious of the tremendous issues of civilization and race. And yarning along, as he says, a man "recently come to writing, who is intoxicated with the new-found use of words to evoke old scenes." This is a valuable confession. It is the key to a small yet inimitable department of literature. It is the peep-hole through which we see something very astonishing indeed—an authentic character out of some fabulous novel shouldering the ghostly author aside, and writing the tale himself.

WILLIAM MCFEE.

S. S. Carrillo

OCEAN ECHOES

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING WHO'S WHO AND WHY—THINGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

ONE often wonders whether the desire to wander is not something more than the fidgeting of a restless soul. I shall not even try to analyse this thing—better leave it to the mystery-writers who are sure of their occult settings, and to the theorists who have never smelled the salt. Nevertheless, there is within me something which says that to halt is to decay.

Although my hair is graying and my stride shortening, my sympathy with adventure is as fresh within me as was the spirit to dare the day I capsized a sail-boat in a squall, and the doctor was called to give aid to my mother. She had fainted at the sight of me sitting on the bottom of the overturned boat. When I was finally rescued my father whipped me, the schoolmaster whipped me, and the good Padre gave much wise counsel to a bitter little boy.

I was then, in the year 1885, ten years old, and that is close on forty years ago.

That day was a never-to-be-forgotten one. Then, for the first time, I experienced the joys of isolation and the dangers that make adventure romantic. The sea and I have been friends; we have understood each other's thoughts. The sullen moods, the tranquil, and the boisterous, each in its own tone, have blended together in harmony, so that the Soul of the Sea is forever *en rapport* with the heart of its lover. I love the sea, and shall continue to, as long as I have eyes to see its indigo and emerald coloring, and ears to hear its rumbling echoes on crest and crag.

My life, until I was eighteen years old, was spent on my father's large farm on the shores of Strangford Lough, in the northeastern part of Ireland. The last of the eighteen years were happy for me, but sad enough for family and friends. I was wild, if that conveys anything to the reader—I mean wild in the sense of seeking danger. My mother was constantly praying for me, while my father laid heavy the lash.

There was another to be reckoned with—the

village schoolmaster. Short and stubby he was, with a black beard and a pug nose, and eyes that were always searching for the bad that might be in a boy. I branded him one time with a glass ink-bottle over his heathery eyebrows. He's dead now, and I suppose I've forgiven him for the welts he made on my young hide.

There were four in our family, two boys and two girls. My brother was older than I by two years. He was a quiet and unassuming boy, always with his head deep in some book. He was never much of an adventurer. I mean that when the hounds and huntsmen went scurrying after a fox or a deer, he would be self-contained with his lessons, while I would jump through the school-room window and run all day with the horses and dogs.

The family, I thought, loved him far better than they did me. They were always holding him up to me as the model of behavior; and surely he was to be admired, for he took adventure like a gentleman, as he did everything; and was a midshipman in Her Majesty's navy when I was a wildling on the high seas. He died while

still in his youth, in South America, and his death has ever remained a grief to me, for I loved him quite as much as the others did.

What I regret infinitely in my life is the worry I caused my mother. I feel that I was responsible for the gray in her hair, that for many years longer should have been black as an eclipsed thunder-cloud. She was the one, when I had been out hunting ducks in the bogs all night, to open the door at three or four o'clock in the morning, whispering softly: "Don't wake your father. He thinks that you went to bed early." That was the mother who stayed by me then, as her memory ever has, kind, loving, and most long-suffering. The principles of forbearance which she taught me are cruel enough when one has to tackle, as I did, a world of selfish and intolerant people, who laugh when you laugh, and when the bumper is empty, yawn, and long for another day when the sea may break a prize more worthy. Nevertheless, they have stayed in my heart from her example, and I do not think that I am unkind, unloving, or impatient, beyond my Celtic nature and the training of the sea.

Mother didn't know that a world existed outside the County Down. She's dead, now, these many years, and I wonder if her soul's imagination has not, from its infinite viewpoint, seen the world somewhat as I see it. If I am at fault she'll forgive, yes, she'll forgive as she did when I turned the boat over, and carried the gun without a license. Mothers always forgive, on, I think, into the Beyond. As I drift with the current of tide and time, I can see in every man the generative forces for good left there by his mother. Without them the world's highways would crowd with wrecks of debauchery, and hulks of men would pile high the ocean shores where kelp once grew.

Our home overlooked the sea, and, within easy view, ships passed on their way to lands beyond the horizon. To a boy of ten with a romantic soul, those strange visitors with white sails and dark hulls spoke their message as they glided by on into haze and adventure. Left on the beach, I gazed with desire into a nothingness of lonesomeness, and longed to be a man that I might wrestle with the Devil or the Deep, and defy each. But I had to await the passing

of slowly rolling years, which brought me a good that I did not appreciate—a well-nourished, strongly-proportioned young frame, fit for fighting and endurance, an eye more than usually steady, and an unusual knowledge of that most difficult seamanship, navigation of small boats along a rocky coast.

I often long for a glimpse of my old home. I mean some day to go back there when Ireland is more as I remember it; and yet my memories seem but as those of yesterday, fleeting like scud across my story, leaving pictures of startling brightness here and there. Land glimpses, often, of horses and cows, of flax and grist-mills, hawthorn hedges blooming, hogs and wild ducks. Particularly of two dogs whose instincts were super-animal, who shared my joys and sorrows, and were whipped when I was whipped, dragging in with me late at night, after I had worn out their poor little legs trailing me through the bogs hour after hour without food.

There are pictures, too, of a loving little boy combing his mother's hair, making her tea for her when she was sick, and waiting on her like a woman; then the wheatfield, when the wheat

was in flower and the hawthorn blossoms open to the bumble-bee, and the thrush and the meadow lark alternated their song for the day; then "Paddy," the Irish hunter, whose soft, nimble lips could fumble any gate until it opened, and whose horse-conscience allowed much gleaning in forbidden pastures, in defiance of our stupidity.

Paddy died from old age, and not from lack of care. My father may not have had all the fatherly instincts, but his animals were royally entertained, and woe betide the groom who neglected the many variations of their diet, or failed to give them a light clean bed of the proper depth!

While I remained at home my father's main worry was to keep me out of sail-boats. In this he was never successful. He was afraid of the sea, and had a horror that he would be drowned some day while trying to rescue me.

Father, too, is resting in a little crowded graveyard, beside those of his own, and the many who played together when he and they were boys.

CHAPTER II

AN EVENT WHICH MAKES MY HAND STILL SHAKE AS I WRITE.—HOUNDED

I WAS fourteen when I cut the schoolmaster over the eye. There was a hunt on. The red-coated huntsmen came in swarms, the beagle hounds yelped viciously as they passed the country school. The schoolmaster must have known of the hunt in advance. The windows were down and locked with a trigger-catch. The front door was locked.

The back door opened into a yard that had a high wall around it, and the iron gate that gave on the country road was hasped fast with an iron padlock. To get in or out of the school a boy must have a quick mind and a ladder. I had the presence of mind, and a step-ladder leaned against the wall to the right of a large blackboard.

The pupils were excited as they worked. The master knitted his brows as he gazed at the

beautifully garbed ladies who rode in the hunt. I raised my hand and spoke pleadingly:

"Please, sir, may I go out?"

Turning to me he said, in his most conquering brogue: "There'll be no leave till the hunt goes by."

The better-disciplined boys looked at me and grinned.

I have often thought, in reading of the various mystical cults, that sometime in the back ages I may have been a dog. The dog instinct was certainly strong in me that day. When the hunting horn sounded I was as instantly responsive as the swiftest beagle that led the hounds. I jumped for the step-ladder, and rushed for the back door. In my haste I knocked down a few of the boys. There was a general uproar, and I, heedless of everything and the consequences, slammed the ladder against the back wall, mounted the steps, and emerged into freedom.

The village school was soon in the distance. I could run then, through stubble-fields and thorn hedges, over pillared gates and stepping-stiles. I overtook the hunt, passed the fat, stubby, gouty riders, and, knowing the cutoffs,

was soon in the midst of the baying beagles. I ran with them till the sun went down.

The stag that made merry the chase took to the ocean for safety. He was later rescued by boatmen, only to lead the hunt another day. The disappointed hounds and I, weary and empty, turned homeward; they to be caressed and fed, and I to be beaten and humiliated. So the hunt broke up on the beach. Red-coated huntsmen and beagles went each to his own home, and each with his own thoughts of the day and the morrow. My visions of what awaited me from an angry father that night and from a heavy-handed schoolmaster the next day made light of my empty stomach and tired body.

I didn't skulk about. I went home to take my medicine. What was a whipping compared with a day with the hounds? My two dogs met me about a mile from the house. I knew by their big melancholy eyes that they were sorry for me. After jumping and frisking around and licking my hands they dropped behind at a respectful distance. It was never safe for them while I was getting punished, for we shared each other's crimes. So I got my whipping, and one

that I have never forgotten. Even supper, saved for me, could not heal my sense of aching injuries, in spite of all the plenty of the Irish way of living in those years. But I was consoled by the thought that I should soon be a man. In fact, not long after, when my father attempted to beat me one day, I warned him that I was unwilling to be punished again, and that if he tried to, he would do it at his own risk. That was the last.

As I went to school next day, I could hear the boys whisper :

“He’s going to get it to-day.”

They were right. I did get it. I entered the school as innocently as the kindergarten children. I noticed that the master, as he looked at me, grew venomous, and buttoned his frock-tailed coat. But everything went well till roll-call, and I had hopes that he had given me up as a bad job. I was sadly mistaken. When he called my name :

“Present, sir,” I shouted.

“Come up here to the desk,” he roared.

Then I knew that the price of the hunt had to be paid. He called the school to atten-

tion, and, fixing his fiery eyes on me, said:

"I'm going to make an example of you. I'm going to teach you that I am the master here and have to be obeyed." As he slung his epithets his voice grew fierce, and his frame shook with anger.

"You'll never amount to anything," he roared, "you,—you,—"

I had a bitter enemy in school—Thomas Coulter by name. I could hear him snicker behind his hands. The master stepped down from his desk with the cane in his hands.

"Hold out your hand!" he shouted. "Twelve slaps with the cane for you."

Four were considered a serious punishment, but twelve were out of the question. I held out my hands and took six, three on each. The welts were too painful for any more. When I refused and said that I had had enough, he sprang at me like a tiger, knocked me down, put his knee on my breast, and almost drove the wind out of me. Then he lost control of his temper and beat me unmercifully. As I lay there on the school-room floor groaning with pain, he stood over me like a madman. Then, realizing

that he had done his job, he took a glass of water, and resumed the work of the school.

I crawled to my seat, but not like a whipped cur by any means; rather with the determination to get even with that black-eyed brute. Half an hour later my chance came. I grabbed a glass ink-bottle, and being good at throwing cobble-stones, I struck him over the eye, laying bare the bone.

With blood dripping down his shirt he tumbled down from his high-topped desk to the platform. I, weak and bruised, feeling that my job was done, but sick at the sight of it, crawled out of the school and staggered home.

I was not sent to that school again.

The parish people were terribly upset over my crime, but never a word did they say against the schoolmaster for what he had done to me. Strange to say, my father openly took my side. He was willing to abuse me himself, but when it came to public punishment I at once became a son of his, and as such was entitled to consideration. My mother, being the village diplomat, had to smooth the troubled waters, which she was well qualified to do.

CHAPTER III

I CONQUER MY ENEMY—IRISH ANNE.—THE BANDMASTER

I WAS sent to another school in another village, but my time there was short also; for the hounds and the huntsmen passed that way, too, and I had learned nothing from my former experience. I rode a donkey to and from that school. The distance was far, although you could count the Irish miles on three fingers of the left hand.

One afternoon I was coming home feeling happy. I had been promoted to a higher grade and was beginning to like the school. My young enemy of the other school, Thomas Coulter, who had laughed when the master whipped me, was also riding a donkey that afternoon. The two animals met in the road, head on. They stopped and exchanged sniffs of greeting. Thomas and I growled at each other like two strange bulldogs, and, without a word, dismounted, pulled

off our coats, and flew at each other's throats.

Thomas was older and heavier, and, as usual, he blackened both my eyes and made my nose bleed. I rode home, horrible to look at. My mother bathed my face and washed the blood off, saying, in her gallant way:

"Oh, how I wish that sometime you could whip that boy."

She cooked me two eggs, and had me drink a pitcher of fresh buttermilk. Then she asked me where Thomas was. I told her up by the Four Roads. I knew that she wanted me to go back and see if I couldn't get even with him. Mother was prudent, but her actions carried meaning.

"Go out to the bog," said she, "and bring me four leeches. I must have your eyes fixed up before school to-morrow."

I didn't go near the bogs. Up to the Four Roads I strode, and met Thomas, the boss of the village boys.

"Come on," I said, "I'm going to whip you this time."

He was whipped, and well whipped. I have often wondered since whether my success was

due to the eggs and buttermilk, or to my mother's daring words: "I wish that sometime you could whip that boy."

When I was twelve years old I had a childish fondness for girls of my age. I liked to be with them, to play with them, caress them, and—which often happened—to fight with them.

One girl in particular, Anne Bailey, interested me. Dressed in starched aprons and polished shoes, she would meet me at the stile and swing with me on the gate. I would carry her books from school, and fight her fights, which were many. Anne, for a child of thirteen years, had a terrible temper. Few boys in the village had any use for her. I liked her because she fought for what she thought was right. The smaller children always had a square deal where Anne was concerned, even if she had to trim a boy to get it.

My fondness for her, I suppose, grew out of the fact that she never lost a fight. If she got into a tight place where she couldn't win with her fists, she would resort to cobble-stones, and Anne could throw those gray granite, ragged stones, so common on the country roads in

Ireland, with unerring accuracy. Her enemies would run before her for the cover of the hawthorn hedges. Yet she had characteristics that belong to her sex. She admired well-dressed boys. On Sunday mornings she would give me her most coquettish smile, for then I was togged in my best.

When I was fifteen, mother had me join a band, and while I remained at home I learned to play the cornet, clarionet, and flute. Music develops imagination in the imaginative. In me, perhaps because I was over-imaginative, music wrought agonies of adventurousness and rainbow-tinted, velvet harmonies of the sights and sounds that lay beyond my ken—over there, north, south, east, and west; over there beyond the sea. Only a few rolling green waves to cross, in that winged ship, flitting through the gauzy haze, and strange lands would emerge from the horizon, lands of color and music. So different, so much more beautiful than my world. Surely I was a strange boy—at once bad and harmless, and full, as I have always been, of the spirit of poetry. Others I have known like myself, fighters of wave and man, also full of

the essence of poetry—many of them, unbelievably many.

I was soon to test the beauties of that other world of my yearning. By the time I reached it, hardship had relegated the poetry of my nature to the safest confines of my heart, and my surface sentiment was not easily hurt, as sometimes is the case with others. I loved every phase of the sea-going life, and longed for more. Now it lives on in my thoughts.

I often think of the bandmaster, and how different he was from my first schoolmaster. What a sense of humor he had, and what pains he took to teach me! What long rides he took on his old white mule! He came on Thursday evenings. His breath was always strong with whiskey, but he seemed none the worse on that account in his teaching.

Our maids, at home, were with us so long that they were part of the household. Only the dairymaid was changed from time to time, for her position seemed to be one that inevitably led to matrimony. There would be a great discussion as to the next one to fill the place, on these occasions. But Maggie, the cook, never

changed. She had been with us for years and years. She ruled our goings-out and our comings-in, and woe betide us if we did not do justice to the good things that were set before us; no mean task when one considers the three hearty meals and the three between-meals that punctuated the Irish farmer's day.

Maggie thought a great deal of the music-master, perhaps because he was good to me, who was her prime favorite, perhaps because he ate most unsparingly of everything that she placed before him on those hungry Thursday nights, perhaps because her soul was also full of music, surcharged with the ceaseless din of pots and pans.

The bandmaster was always kind and smiling, and made light of our mistakes, sticking his fingers into his ears most comically to listen for discords. For the life of me I could not see how that process could facilitate his perception, but he seemed to locate discords with unerring accuracy.

Surely he had a difficult task teaching us county boys to play together, but he did, and rode his mule over twenty miles of cobble-stones

once a week to do it. How excited and happy the old fellow was, when, at last, after four months of practice and effort, we played "The Minstrel Boy" without a hitch. That was his favorite piece, and he felt that if a band could play that, it could master anything in music.

Many years ago he and the old mule have gone up the Long Trail to return no more. Only in an occasional thought, like the memory of springtime, can they return—the mule and the Music Master.

CHAPTER IV

I LEAVE MY MOTHER, AND THE SEA CLAIMS ME. MY LITTLE DOGS MUST HUNT ALONE

LONG before I was seventeen I had some knowledge of the sea. Often I had sailed away in an open boat out of sight of land, and again many coastwise schooners put in to the Lough. I had learned to run aloft and knew many of the sails and ropes—in fact I was about ready to leave home and sail away. But my mother held me for another year, hoping vainly to keep me to a course at the university. How miserable I made it for those at home!

School I detested, and, judging from my changes, school detested me. Father thought that he might be able to make a farmer of me. Mother, in spite of her intellectual yearnings, knew differently. She knew that the wild waves and the flapping canvas called me, and that my harvest waited for me in the deep sea.

Winter was over that year, and I was nearing

my eighteenth birthday, which was near Saint Patrick's Day (the one day in the year when my father permitted himself to celebrate until he could celebrate no more). The farmers were plowing the fields, and the hawthorn buds were bursting with coming spring. The wild birds were mating and starting to build their nests, and the lark, never forgetful of his praise of the spring, sang his song way up in the sky.

My two dogs were old now. Prince seldom hunted with me in the bogs, and when one stayed behind the other did too. I loved them and hated to leave them. We had a great deal in common, especially Prince and I; our joys and sorrows together had been many. But he was so old and stiff that I felt that if he should go with me it would be only for a little while. He was soon to rove with the dogs who had gone on before him, in the valleys where deer and duck and rabbit and hare are plentiful, and dogs' barks are but memories of their yester-days.

Mother saw to my going away. She packed my clothes, socks and pulse-heaters. These last were a large part of her creed. One would be

immune to any epidemic if he wore them on his wrists. I took them to please her, although my vocation, above all others, called not for pulse-warming. Then she tucked some money in my pocket. I kissed her good-bye, and waved from the hill.

I can see her now, gathering up her white apron to wipe the tears away, a beautiful picture for a boy to remember; one of love and self-sacrifice that only mothers are destined to give. My father, I am now ashamed to say, I did not see. What he said to my mother I can readily guess, for I never saw nor heard from him again.

When I said good-bye to Irish Anne, tears like dew-drops—the kind that cluster on a spider's web in the early morning—shone in her big blue Irish eyes. She was nearly a woman then, and religiously inclined. Her days of curving, cobble-stone throwing were over. We parted with friendship's kiss. I learned years afterwards that she was married, and had a large family of boys and girls. Perhaps I may have met some of her children in the highways of my rambles, but how was I to know them?

The night boat for Glasgow used to make the

trip in about twelve hours. I took it, and landed in Glasgow the following morning, going straight with a sailor's instinct to a sailor's boarding-house. It was on the Broomielaw.

A Swede ran it. He was married to a Highland woman, and together they made the Scandinavian sailor's boarding-house hum. He was a drunkard who had formerly been bosun on a Black Ball liner. She was endowed with Scotch thrift and business sense, and had always an eye open for a "homeward bounder" with his pocket full of money. Such a one could always sit at the head of her table, and welcome.

The Swede had my pay for one month's board, and assured me a ship by that time. Seeing that I had still some money left, he begged me to put it into his care. Like the young fool that I was, I did this, and of course that was the last of the money. He went out promptly, and got drunk, spending it all.

The boarding-house catered to all creeds and colors; everyone was on an equal footing. When one sang, they all sang. In a fight everybody joined in, and, after the fight, when the broken pieces were swept away, and the scalp-wounds

had been plastered, they would all drink together and be friends again.

The second week that I was there the Swede wanted to know if I would go with him down the Clyde on a sloop he had to a place called Broderick. He wanted to load her with sand to haul back to Glasgow to sell. Then he would give me back the money he had taken from me. Once more I "fell" for him, and went along, on a short but perilous trip that was to bring me within plain sight of Davy Jones's Locker.

CHAPTER V

MY FIRST VOYAGE WITH THE SWEDE— EXPERIENCE

THE sloop was about thirty tons. She had one mast that was stuck forward on her. The main boom was about thirty-five feet long. The sails were old, and had many patches. The small cabin aft in her was filthy and full of rats. The deck was so old that you could see through the seams, and young as I was, I was fully aware of the risk I was taking sailing in her. But the Clyde never got very rough, and knowing that, and believing that I should get back my five pounds, I felt like taking the chance.

So one morning we set sail—myself, another penniless sailor, and the proprietor of the Scandinavian sailor's boarding-house, late bosun of a Black Ball liner.

The Swede wasn't much of a sloop sailor. I could see that by the way he handled her.

Between drifting and sailing we made Greenock, eighteen miles below Glasgow. Here he put in, saying that he needed water. But it was whiskey he wanted. He sold practically everything that was movable on the deck to a junk man. He did leave an anchor on board. Then for two more days he drank, and spent the junk money, while the "broke" sailor and I stayed on board and waited.

On the morning of the third day he came on board broke and sick, and we set sail again for Broderick. We made it in twenty-four hours; that is, we made the beach where the sand was, and dropped the anchor about a quarter of a mile from the surf. We put the boat over, and commenced loading sand by the simple process of loading the small boat, rowing off, and shoveling the sand into the sloop.

The sloop was better than half loaded, when one morning the Swede rushed out to tell us that we were caught in a storm.

"Hurry boys," he shouted, "and get the mainsail on her."

It was a storm, all right, but not a bad one just then. There was a good breeze coming

from the southwest, and with it a long groundswell. The Swede was pale with fear. The sloop was on a lee shore, and he didn't know how to beat her off. We set the mainsail and started to heave up on the anchor.

I told him that was not the way to get off a lee shore. The old Irish fishermen had taught me in their fishing-smacks how it was done. Shoot up the jib, slip the cable, give her the mainsail, and away, close-hauled, to fight for sea-room till you get a good lead off shore. But the Swedish bosun would not listen to a boy.

She started to drag her anchor, and was headed straight for a spit of rocks. As she dragged he prayed, then started to swear, and said that he wouldn't give a damn if the sloop belonged to him.

"Who does she belong to?" I shouted, as we were nearing the rocks.

"My wife and brother-in-law," he cried, and with death staring us in the face went on to tell me how she happened to be theirs. I forget the intricacies of the ownership at this distance, but I can still hear the shrill tones of his high-pitched voice rising in trivialities above the

solemn tones of nature. Before he got through, however, I felt that the grave would be preferable to an interview with his wife once the sloop was lost.

She struck the rocks. The mast went overboard, the sea lashed over her. The undertow would pull away from the rocks, only to get a good start with the next sea, and slam her up against them. We clung to her like leeches, the Swede crying in bitter anguish:

“I wouldn’t give a damn if she belonged to me—I wouldn’t give a——”

Young and fearless as I was, I had but little hope that any of us would get off with our lives.

The sloop gave a hard thump, and the sternpost was sprung from its rusty fastenings and floated alongside. Another sea like the last one and she would smash into firewood, and the bosun of the Black Ball liner and his crew would be found bloated and bruised on the high-water line.

But the God of the Deep was not ready as yet to destroy my dream of the sea. I was to find worse than this before he was through with me. The sloop, what was left of her, by some

strange freak of the waves, swung through head on, with the jibboom reaching over the rocks. The sailor was quick to seize this heaven-sent opportunity. He crawled out on the jibboom end, and when the sea lurched back dropped to the sloppy rock and to safety.

I wasn't so fortunate. When I let go the jibboom the undertow caught me and I got pretty badly mauled—a cut head, skinned shins, a few sore ribs; and I was gorged with salt water.

The Swede was doomed; that seemed a foregone conclusion. We were powerless to help him, and the thought made me cold with horror. Years afterwards, hundreds of miles from land, I saw men drown in sight of the ship, and felt the same overpowering misery.

A short distance to the right of where the sloop was pounding against the rocks lay a small sand patch between two reefs. It wasn't over twenty feet wide, and here the waves swept high on the sandy beach. The Swede was destined to live. He was yet to drink ale out of pewter mugs, and watch where the homeward-bounder hung his trousers.

While I looked, with my thoughts going heavenwards, a sea struck the sloop and she broke in two. I turned my head away. I couldn't watch a human being drown. Then a curious thing happened. The Swede still clung to the cabin hatch, and that part of the sloop was carried out and away from the rocks, and washed high and dry upon the patch of sandy strand. He was none the worse, aside from being soaked, while I was bruised and bleeding. Who shall know the ways of Fate!

Some time later the life-savers came, and with them a dignified and portly-looking man, the wreckmaster. Very important he was. As we stood there shivering, wet and cold, with not a shilling among us, the world looked dark to me. Then I remembered what my father had once said:

"If he goes to sea, he'll soon come home again."

CHAPTER VI

BACK TO GLASGOW. A LIVELIER CHAPTER, ON GIRLS. THE GINGERBREAD BATTLE.

THERE is always some silvery lining to most everyone's dark clouds. Coming down the beach and heading for the wreck strolled an Englishman. He looked cosy and comfortable in his Scotch tweeds and long homespun stockings.

The Swede and the wreckmaster were busy over the salvage question, and I told the Englishman all about our experience getting ashore. He felt deeply for us, or rather for me, and putting his hand into his trousers pocket handed me a gold sovereign. My, but that coin looked good to me!

The Swede's ear, ever attuned, caught the jingle, and he wanted me to share it with him.

"Oh, no," said I, "every dog for himself now. I'm through with you."

Someone paid the sailor's fare and mine back to Glasgow, maybe the wreckmaster, in lieu of paying for the wreck. The Swede stayed behind either to attend to business, as he said, or because he was afraid to face his wife.

Why the sailor and I should have gone back to the boarding-house on the Broomielaw is a question for psychologists to answer. It is something I never have understood, any more than I can understand why other sailors constantly did the same thing, returning persistently to places where they were sure to be robbed and abused.

But we did, and the reception that we received from the Swede's wife and her brother is one to be remembered. The news of the wreck had reached Glasgow ahead of us, and when I walked into the boarding-house she knocked me down. When I got up she knocked me down again, and it seemed that I was the cause of the disaster in that I had given her husband my money.

Then it was the turn of the sailors who were stopping there. They voiced their opinion of the kind of sailor I was. The great trouble, it seemed, was that the sloop was not insured—

as if I had anything to do with that. The blame was on me, fully.

I made up my mind that night that if I were to become a sailor I should have also to become a fighter, because I could see that without this qualification one could never be a success on the high seas.

The trail of my next venture of Love led into the Swede sailor's boarding-house in Glasgow. Jessie, the waitress who served the meals, seemed to admire me, or perhaps it was the suits that I wore. She was the type of a seaport girl. She admired new faces and dressy young men. While she led me to believe I was her first choice, she was madly in love with a fireman on a steamer. He was to arrive home shortly from a Mediterranean port, and I was to find out where I stood with the giddy Scotch lassie.

He did arrive, and came to the boarding-house in his go-ashore clothes. Tall and lanky he was, and baked white from the heat of the stoke-hole. The coal-dust was yet in his ears, his eye-lashes were cemented black from the slack of the slag. His eyes were small and glassy, and he looked rather vicious as he rolled into the boarding-

house and demanded to know where his Jessie was. She not being there, he bought a pitcher of beer and sat down to drink and talk with the other sailors. They, being creative gossips and ready to humor and cater to the homeward-bounder, told him of the faithlessness of his Jessie, how she seemed to be very much in love with another man, and they doubted by this time if she had any regard for him at all.

"Who is he?" he cried, and I trembled where I sat, at the sight of his gnarly fists.

But I need not have been afraid. No danger that they would betray me. Agreeable as a fight always was to them, beer was more agreeable still, and a homeward-bounder silenced is a homeward-bounder lost forever. They dodged the question.

He got very angry and swore that women were all alike, and not to be trusted. He bought more beer all round, to the satisfaction of the sailors, and gulped down his with oaths of revenge.

"I'll show her she can't trifle with my bloody 'eart!" he shouted.

Just then the door to the dining-room opened

and Jessie walked in. She exclaimed as she ran toward him, "Ah, me bright laddie's home at last!"

"Keep away from me, Jessie," he stuttered, "I've been hearing about you since I've been away. Now I'm going to get me another girl."

Jessie appeared crushed, crying: "Oh, Harry! Don't leave me like this! I have been true to you."

"Well, by God! It's off between you and me," said Harry, waving her aside as he got up from the table.

At the top of her voice Jessie screamed that if he did this she should drown herself in the Clyde.

"Go to it," cried Harry, as he staggered out of the boarding-house.

True to her word, she went shrieking out of the house, and ran across the street with her hair flying in the breeze, to the Clyde's rim. The sailors came shouting after her from the boarding house, urging the bystanders with their shouts not to "let 'er drown 'er bloomin' self." I ran with them, and Harry ran too.

Barefooted women, with children in arms,

joined in the chase. Jew peddlers dropped their packs and wrung their hands as they ran to the Clyde. A longshoreman was coiling down rope on the wharf. He stopped flaking it long enough to speak to Jessie.

"Well, lass; you're at it again. Who is it this time?"

Jessie stopped when she came to the stringer at the bottom of the wharf.

"I'm going over this time," she shouted vengefully to the longshoreman, "and no mistake."

"Over ye go, then, I'll no stop ye," and he smiled to himself.

"Stop, Jessie, don't jump over." And the bold, ale-laden fireman thrust his way up to her, and took her in his arms.

The longshoreman, grinning openly, went on coiling down his rope. The sentimental boarding-house sailors swallowed hard as if they were eating sea-biscuit, and bashfully stalled an approaching tear. The pedlars walked back to their packs with their hands behind their backs this time; the mothers gave their babies the breast and wondered what it was all about; and I slunk away to where the broken shadows

from the tall ships lay humped over the hydraulic capstans.

This was the city of Glasgow in those days, and a fitting place for a jilt from a boarding-house waitress to a green, gawky, country boy. My romance of that period ended there. There were many more; and, doubtless, if I can remember them all I shall touch on them as I rove along, and I'll not spare myself.

For that matter I am not ashamed of my dealings with women; and I may say of the average sailor of the old school as well as of myself, that his dealings with women are based on a light-hearted attitude but a thorough respect for the sex.

When they are married, and their wives get the drift of them, they dominate them like the gales that squeeze them to the rigging. Their wish is to be bossed by someone who is feminine and has their interests at heart; and also it is rarely that a sailor's wife is jealous of her husband, for she realizes that in all conscience he is only human. Long months of idleness and hardship end in landing on shores where a smile or a wink from a woman awakes in his lonesome

heart a new fondness for the wife he left behind. If he seeks pleasure in foreign lands, it is not disrespectful to the wife he loves. The craving for home and dear ones comes first with the old-time sailor.

Where my sea trails have led me to cities, I have often wondered how men I have known could kiss their wives good-bye, knowing full well that their wives were only a blind for society, and then after reveling all night with the bird in the gilded cage, go home with the blackest of lies on their lips. To daughters, too. How about the other man's daughter? The bird in the gilded cage?

I once refused command of a yacht, for no other reason than this.

CHAPTER VII

THE REAL THING AT LAST—THE GINGER

IT happened that there would be a Blue-nose ship to sail on in a few days, and the Swede's wife thought that this was a good chance to ship me away; so I got a bed in the boarding-house after my licking that night, in preparation for the final fleecing which is administered to all sailors on departure from such boarding-houses, and is made as palatable as possible on account of their inevitable transformation into homeward-bounders.

Two days later I was shipped aboard a barque bound for Sidney, Cape Breton. I wrote to my mother, and told her that at last I was off to sea. There was a Jew outfitting store next to the boarding-house, and here I was outfitted from my month's advance. They took it all; and gave me a blanket, a straw tick, a few cigars that I couldn't smoke, a clammy handshake, and this Godspeed: "Be sure and visit us again." That is part of their stock in trade.

Hell will never close its gates as long as one of those outfitting stores for sailors exists.

We towed down the Clyde, on the Blue-nose barque. The crew was a conglomeration of everything, Greeks, negroes, Scandinavians, English, Irish, Scotch and Germans. The mate was over six feet tall, stout and wiry, with a hand on him that had the spread of the wing of a mallard duck, and a mustache that obscured his mouth. His voice would chill you to the marrow, but he was proud of it.

The captain was broad, chubby, and porky looking. He carried his wife and child along. She was quite the reverse of him in looks, tall and slender as a bean-pole. The child, a boy, was three years old, and able to run all around the poop-deck.

When we got well out to sea, we set all sail and let go the tugboat. I was of very little use at first aboard that ship. I knew nothing about square-riggers. But I was soon to learn.

About the second day out everyone commenced to scratch himself. Even the child would lean against the binnacle and scratch its little back and shoulders. The Blue-nose barque was lousy

fore and aft, and we even found vermin crawling in the upper topsails. One old sailor who had many years behind him on the sea, remarked that as nearly as he could remember, the flying jib-boom was the highest he had ever found them on a ship.

Sailors as a rule in those days were clean. They took baths, and scrubbed their clothes. The crew of our barque got busy, but while we drove the vermin from the decks and fore-castle, we were never sure about the sails. They were never changed while I was aboard of her.

The food was new to me. Stirabout, stewed apples and gingerbread, salt-horse, which was scarce, and pork once a week—on pea-soup day. The hardtack, the boss of the fo'c'sle said, was good. He was a Liverpool sailor, and the biscuits were supposed to have come from there.

Far be it from anyone in the fore-castle to question him. He was a fighter, and we had a world of respect for him. His word was law to the shell-backs. Four days out from Glasgow, a thick, heavy-set Dane thought that he would become the boss of the fore-castle. The quarrel arose over the equal distribution of the ginger-

bread. The Dane was a big eater, and a greedy one.

Liverpool Jack, that was his name, had his code of ethics, that all were to share with the food. The Dane was the more powerful man of the two, and he tried to put his bluff across and "con" the Irishman. What a mistake he made!

They stripped to the waist for action. He cleared the benches away to give them room. The forecastle was large, which favored Jack. In all the years afterwards that I spent on the sea, that fight on the Blue-nose barque beat them all. Jack trimmed the Dane, and beat him until he cried "enough." The fight was clean but it was speedy. There was no hitting nor kicking when one of them was down. The Dane's head was large before the fight—but who could describe how large it was afterwards? After we had led him around for a couple of days he became quite a good Dane, satisfied with his equal share of the gingerbread.

While I was always doing the wrong thing from a sailor's point of view, I got along very well in the forecastle. But not with the mate, who, I believe, despised me. I told him that I

was a sailor, and he had found out that I wasn't —only a green country boy.

When we were nearing the eastern edge of the Newfoundland Banks it commenced to blow one evening, and the mate ordered the main-royals clewed up. The barque carried no fore-royal. The breeze was too strong for this light sail. Usually it took two men to furl it. But this evening he shouted to me to shin up, and make it fast alone.

I did get a gasket around it, but I was unable to pull the sail up on the yard the way it should have been, snugly furled. When I came down on deck again it was growing dark. The mate greeted me with an oath, and a kick from his Wellington boots.

"Get up there," he said, "and get that sail up on the yard, or I'll break every bone in your body."

I have often thought of that kick. That night was the first in my life that I felt I was alone with the stars. The barque below me looked like a helpless bug being borne away by the whim of the sea. The light from the binnacle lamp shone on the figure of the helmsman.

What an insignificant creature he looked! The very wheel looked like spider's web, spun for the moths of frail humanity.

The mate had made me angry, and I was in no hurry to obey him, but as I looked at the stars above me, and the restless sea below, I felt that it was worth more than one kick to be allowed the privilege of being alone with one's self on the main royal of a Blue-nose barque in the fine thrill of such a night as this. Feeling so, the strength of youth aided me to the difficult task, and I rolled the sail up on the yard. The mate might abuse me, but he could never destroy the spirit of the sea that was born in my soul.

We had an accident that brought gloom to the forecastle. A Greek sailor fell through the 'tween decks down into the lower hold. We carried him up to the deck. He was unconscious from a blow on the head. He had the bunk over me, and we put him into it. The mate came forward with liniment, and orders to rub it on his head.

"And," said he, "give him these pills when he comes to."

Beecham's Pills for a fractured skull! Such

was the practice of medicine aboard the average sailing ship of those days.

The Greek sailor didn't come to for forty-eight hours, and in the meantime our Scotch cook, out of kindness of heart, prepared a flax-seed poultice for the head, and claimed the honor of restoring the Greek to his senses again.

Sailors were hard to kill thirty years ago, barring an accident, such as drowning, or falling from aloft. They were a good deal like the jackass—they would grow so old that they'd just naturally wander away and die from old age. I know one master of a ship, who is over eighty years old, and just as full of fight as ever, and still on the job. The sailors of to-day are better fed and clothed, they have rooms to sleep in, and waiters to serve their food. "Sissies," the caloused old-timers call them. They say that they belong in Snug Harbor, and the sooner they go the better. I do not feel that they are so much to blame, for many of them were heroes in the war, but it would not hurt if they had more training at the hands of two-fisted men, and at sea the working day should be more than eight hours.

Twenty-three days out from Glasgow we sailed into Cape Breton Harbor, and dropped the anchor. I may mention here that the barque was in ballast from Scotland. We got orders at Cape Breton to take on more ballast, and to proceed to the St. Lawrence River, and as far up it as the mouth of the Saguenay. There, I believe, she was to load lumber for a South American port.

Yellow fever was raging in South America then. Liverpool Jack made up his mind that he wasn't going to any yellow fever port, and so announced to the forecastle.

We sailed up the St. Lawrence to the saw-mill town, and anchored about two miles from the beach. The lumber came off in barges. We took it aboard through the 'tween deck ports, and stowed it down in the hold.

There was no possible chance that I could see to get ashore, and I was as anxious as Jack to leave the barque. The stories the crew told in the forecastle had me badly scared. One old man was saying: "I'll tell you men how it is down there. You come to anchor in Rio harbor to-night, and if the wind should haul off the land

and blow from the city you're dead in the morning. Mind you," with warning hand upraised, "that isn't all, men. You turn as black as Hell!" he whispered

That story was enough for me. There wouldn't be any escape from Rio. Out of Hell there was no redemption.

CHAPTER VIII

JACK PROVES HIS METTLE—THE PIER-HEAD JUMP—THE SUNKEN CANOE

THE captain and mate were seeing to it that the crew should not get away. It always mystified me how swiftly and unerringly the most secret and darkly-guarded news reached the "Old Man." When the time came that I myself occupied that envied post, it seemed more mysterious still when anything escaped my watchfulness and perception. So far does one advance in intelligence and the sense of responsibility as he earns the stages of promotion from the fo'c'sle to the poop-deck.

The captain's boat was hoisted on board every evening, and the oars put away. There was also a night-watchman, who had two guns strapped around him, but did not look fierce to correspond. Being a Frenchman, and rather religious, I doubted if the necessity could arise to make him shoot to kill.

Liverpool Jack and I held a conference, and decided that the time was near to make a dash for freedom. The barque would be loaded in a few days, and then it would be too late. The watchman did not speak English. Jack was terribly upset, for he couldn't speak French, and so was deprived of all diplomatic maneuvering.

The watchman had a birch-bark canoe in which he paddled off to the ship evenings, leaving it tied at the stern of a lighter of lumber. We saw it, and kept it secret from the crew, who were also trying to devise some means of getting ashore.

Liverpool Jack was as crafty as a sea-otter. One night he called me about twelve o'clock. I had been working late, whittling a toy for the captain's boy, of whom I was fond (as I have always been of children, finding them good company at the worst of times), and was sleeping soundly.

"Roll a suit of clothes up in your oilskin coat," said he. "We're going to-night. I have had my eye on the watchman."

"You're not going to kill?" I asked, in a great fright, while I scrawled the child's name on a

scrap of old paper, and left the toy in my bunk.

"Oh, no," said Jack, reassuringly, and a little flattered. "We haven't time for that."

"Here's my plan," he continued hurriedly, in a low voice. "Tie the bundle on your back, and strip naked—we may have to swim for it. When the watchman walks over to the port side we'll slide down the rope hanging from the starboard bow, swim to the lighter, board her, creep over the lumber to the stern, and then if all goes well all that is left to do is simple enough. Drop into the canoe and paddle ashore. Then we can hide in the woods."

It all seemed simple enough to him, but I felt as if the last of my time on earth had come. "Suppose they kill us," I objected.

He looked me over quickly, as if he had half a mind to leave me there and then. But his eye softened, and I knew that he had in a way grown fond of me, as he answered, roughly enough:

"How about Rio? It's pretty damned brave you'll have to learn to be, my boy, if you mean to stay away from your mother."

All ready, naked, and with our bundles

strapped on our backs, we stood forward of the galley, watching the watchman. It was in the month of June when daylight comes in early in these latitudes. It was after one o'clock. Surely the devil possessed the Frenchman. He was not making a move to cross to the port side. Where he stood now, at the starboard side, he commanded a full view of lighter and canoe. I could see him toying with his revolver, and peering suspiciously from time to time into the fo'c'sle. How we ever had come up without his seeing us was a mystery.

It was past two. We were still nervously watching for the Frenchman to move. Mars hung low in the eastern sky, blinking in the dawn. This was my first big adventure. Although thoroughly scared, I had to admire the coolness of Liverpool Jack.

"Let's go," he whispered, with fascinating determination. "We won't wait another minute. The damned Frenchman's either frozen to the deck, or he's asleep."

We lowered ourselves cautiously over the bow into the water. Oh, but it was cold, and there were two miles to swim to the beach. He took

the lead, and headed for the lighter, which we boarded. Just as we started to crawl over the lumber the Frenchman spied us. His voice was nothing to him. Just a roar in torrents of French, until he seemed to be about to choke. He fired his revolver, and the echoes awoke the cranes on the strand.

Jack didn't stop for this, but with me following him closely, kept on for the stern of the lighter. He got into the canoe all right. I had never been in one. It was birch-bark, and in my haste I jumped onto it and turned it over, spilling us both into the water. The current was strong under the stern of the barque, and when we got our bearings we were well away from the ship. But as we rose they saw us.

Bullets began to splash around us, and I could hear the mate's voice heading the outcry. "Dive," panted Jack, and suited the action to the word. I tried to, but could not on account of the oilskin pack. But the current soon took us out of range, and they began to lower a boat.

Our feet soon struck the bottom of the sandy beach, and we saw, in the morning's rays, the captain's boat heading for the shore. Naked we

landed, and naked we ran for at least five miles, into the woods. When we stopped the sun was up, and mosquitoes were there by the million, ready to feast upon two runaway sailors.

We got into our clothes wet as they were, and lay down to go to sleep. The mosquitoes saw to it that we did not sleep long. When we awoke we were hungry and stiff. Not a penny did either of us have to buy something to eat. This thought didn't worry Liverpool Jack.

"I'll go and get something to eat," he said. "I know enough French to ask for it."

He took a trail that led to the saw-mill town, and when he came back he had news, and food—two loaves of bread, a pail of buttermilk, and a chunk of butter.

"I heard that the watchman got fired," he mumbled between bites, "and that the mate is still looking for us."

CHAPTER IX

BUTTERMILK, BUNKHOUSE AND BUGABOO

“**H**AVE you any more news?” said I, after a while, for Jack was looking back persistently over his shoulder, and it seemed to me that danger lurked in the trees, and that the burly mate must by now be hot after us. Yet I enjoyed this independence that I had never known before—freedom to roam regardless of God or Man. I wonder if such a taste of freedom from the laws of society is really good for a boy, or whether he is more unfit to face the world with such a background. Jack answered my question:

“Yes, I have more news,” he said. “We follow a trail that leads to the right, and forty miles from here we come to a river. There we can take a boat and go up the Saguenay to Chicoutimi.”

“But,” I objected, “how are we going to take a passenger boat? We have no money.”

"Leave that to me," he said. "I've been in tighter places than this before, and got out of them."

What a wonderful philosopher Jack was always! Optimistic, and never without a smile or an encouraging word, and yet ready for a fight at the drop of the hat. We filled ourselves full of bread and buttermilk, for we had no knowledge of when we should eat again. Then we stuffed what was left of the bread into our pockets, and started out, heading as directed through the Canadian woods, without guide or milepost or sidelight.

We walked until it grew dark. I didn't know if we were on the right trail, and Jack didn't care. We came to an old log bunkhouse, and crawled into pine-needle bunks. But not for long, thanks to my foolishness.

When we lay down to sleep Jack cautioned against mosquitoes. We wrapped our coats around our heads in the hope of keeping our faces and necks clear. Jack could adapt himself to anything, and in less than five minutes he was fast asleep. But I would have smothered with a coat around my head, and being sleepless, I

stood, looking out of the window. Presently I thought that I saw lights moving about in the forest.

"The mate! the mate!" I cried, tugging at Jack in a frenzy of fear.

"Where?" he asked, sleepily, yet alert, and not at all disturbed.

"See the lights?" And truly by now there were a dozen of them, it seemed to me.

"Come on," said he. "This is not the place for us." He grabbed his coat and ran out of the bunkhouse door with me after him. We didn't know what direction we took, but we ran until we could run no farther.

"I guess they'll have a job overhauling us now," said Jack, panting.

"Yes," I agreed, "we've gone a long way, if we've only gone straight."

Many a laugh I've had over that chase. While we were sitting there, exhausted from the run, I saw the lights again.

"Heavens, there they are again, there they come!" said I, jumping up. Jack, being somewhat infected with my state of mind, jumped also.

"Where in Hell do you see the lights?"

"There, there!"

"Great God," roared Jack, "they aren't lights, they're fireflies!" I didn't know what fireflies were, but they carried their lights with them, and they looked like masthead lights to me.

We fought mosquitoes until daylight broke. Then, damp, cold, and hungry, we continued along the trail. There were many trails; which one led to the steamboat landing only God knew. We walked on. Noon came and went, and our trouble was now, not in the distance to the river, but in our stomachs. Hunger, the great disciplinarian, wished us back to the Blue-nose barque. Ah! we mourned gingerbread and stewed apples; yes, and almost Rio and yellow fever. Only for the sake of filling our wrinkled floppy tummies.

Jack grew silent, and I, who had never known hunger, staggered on behind him. It was late in the afternoon when we came to an opening, and saw a house in the distance.

"Come on, we're all right now," said Jack.

They gave us plenty to eat at that house, and

showed us to the boat-landing. How kind some people are in the world! The old French lady met us at the door. She could not understand our English but she could read our faces, and that was enough for that dear old soul. She welcomed us with the heart of a mother. Her house was our house, and Jack, who should have been calloused by his years of beach-combing, bowed his head and dropped big tears on the plate before him.

It was one o'clock in the morning when the boat made the landing. How we were to get aboard without paying a fare I did not know, and Jack would not say. He did suggest that I follow him.

"Haul in the gangplank!" the mate shouted.

I stood trembling behind a pile, afraid to be seen. The gangplank was in, the boat moving. Then, like a flash, Jack cried: "Take a run, and a jump, and board her."

The spirit of adventure fears no danger. We boarded the moving steamer, and hid away in the lee shadows of the smoke-stack. We were unseen, because the crew, when they took in the

gangway, moved forward, and night hid us from the eyes on the bridge.

I had learned more in two days, than I had in all the eighteen years I had lived.

CHAPTER X

LIVERPOOL JACK GOES OFF ON HIS OWN—STEEL BRIDGES AND A WATERLOGGED SHIP FOR ME

AS the boat rounded the bends in that beautiful river, and the chug-chug of the engines echoed back from the granite walls that guarded the water in its peaceful flow to the sea, I cuddled by the warm smoke-stack and, unheeding the morrow, fell asleep.

When I awoke the sun was high, the boat was moored to a wharf, and the sound of winches greeted my ears.

"Come on, Jack," I said, "this must be Chicoutimi." We walked ashore. No one on board noticed us.

There was a railroad being built from there to Montreal. Chicoutimi, as we saw it, was a good-sized town. I hunted for work, and got a job painting steel bridges. Jack said that he'd go on to Montreal and find another ship. He claimed that he was a sailor and not a land-

lubber. No railroad work for him, climbing over steel bridges.

Whether there is in a sailor's makeup a certain amount of fatalism, or whether it is mere childish trust in the future, or whether sailors take their friendships so for granted that separation is not a matter of moment, certain it is that partings with them are over in a minute; and equally certain it is that given the usual course of events, they will sometime meet again. Of the shipmates I have had there are few that I quitted forever at the end of the voyage.

Jack said good-by to me as he would to a comparative stranger, and started up the railroad track singing in his hearty voice the old-time chantey: "Going a-roving with my fair Maid." He disappeared in the distance with never a backward look. It seemed that the prospect of the two hundred and forty mile walk to Montreal meant nothing to him.

I was too young not to feel heart-broken at being left by the only real friend I had had since I left home. Evidently, I thought, I didn't mean much to him, and it seemed that he might understand the weariness which bound me to

take work now instead of following him, and might concede something. But I was mistaken in all this, for Jack's heart was of the warmest, and that would be clear when we met again.

For two months I painted bridges, at one dollar and seventy-five cents a day, for as many hours as twice the eight-hour day. Neck-breaking work. Seventy-five cents went for board and room, the rest for clothes, and when I had paid my car fare to Quebec I had little left over.

The call of the sea had me again, and I took the boat down the Saguenay, as passenger this time, and found a sailor's boarding-house at Quebec. An Irishwoman, three daughters and a son ran it. The food and treatment were better than in the Glasgow boarding-house, but everybody in it seemed to be either drunk or fighting. I have always been, as the drunkard says, "able to drink a drop of beer now and then." But I have always had a horror of degenerating through drinking into this low type. Where I got this feeling I do not know, for, with the purest of thoughts, my actions as a young man were, in all conscience, wild enough. My captains later on, when I sailed first mate with some of

them on many voyages, as my story will show, chose me to drink and play with ashore, then wrung their hands over the wildness of me, and assured their friends that on shore I could certainly bear watching, although when they had me on their ships they could sleep in peace when it was my watch on deck.

By the end of a week I had shipped aboard a square-rigger bound for Liverpool and loaded with lumber. Here I was to learn another phase of the sea, the psychology of the men who command deepwater ships—and in a way I was to find myself.

The captain, an Irishman from the County Wexford, was in the last throes of consumption. The mate was a big, burly Scotchman, and a drunkard. The second mate was old, wizened, and rheumatic. The crew was mostly English. We had one negro sailor in the forecastle, born of an Irish father and a black mother in the West Indies, who, curiously enough, could speak only Gaelic. I was much excited and mystified by all this, for he was very black himself; but the mate could understand him, and I soon found that I could, too.

There were good men in the crew, and some excellent chantey-men among them. They accepted me as a man, for now I stood as one, five feet ten, sinewy, quick of eye and hand, nimble upon my feet, and deep-chested. Neither was I ill-looking, nor ill-natured, being always quick to smile, and quick to sympathize, though I was something of a fighter. I have never had trouble handling gangs of men—a proud boast indeed for a vagabond! Not an unusual one for an Irishman, either; for it seems to go with the black hair and clean-shavenness and roving gray eye of some of us, that we are often good at taking orders, and often good at giving them.

We towed down the St. Lawrence to the point where the river widened out, then made sail, and with a slanting breeze started for the Newfoundland Banks. The captain was constantly coughing and spitting and in danger of dying before we reached Liverpool.

The mate ran out of whiskey when we were two or three days out. He was in danger also. He began to act like a crazy man. The cook considered himself very good-looking, and was always anxious to fascinate the pretty bar-maids

ashore. He carried lotions and tonics about with him to improve his appearance. The thirsty mate got next to this, and stole the cook's Florida water, three bottles of it. This he drank as a substitute for whiskey.

After he had had a little of this he seemed to improve, and gave his orders to the crew more sensibly, which relieved the strain in the fo'c'sle. They were already superstitious, and with the two chiefs afflicted they figured that the ship was cursed, and that something would happen, for the scent of Florida was abroad in the air, wherever the mate moved. Something did happen as we were reaching away for the southern edge of the Banks.

One morning the captain staggered forward over the deckload of lumber and asked where the mate was. His voice was so weak he couldn't speak above a whisper, his eyes were sunken in his head, and he looked little better than a skeleton.

No one on board could find the mate, but there was a sailor who had been aloft overhauling the fore upper topsail buntlines, who said that he hadn't seen the mate, but that he had heard

a splash in the middle watch alongside. This settled the mystery. The mate had jumped overboard, Florida water and all.

The next night we had a change of weather. The wind hauled to the southeast, and the sky turned black and stormy. The captain ordered all hands to take in sail, although there was not much wind to speak of. Not being familiar with storms at sea, I reveled in this new adventure. I got to know the ropes, yards and sails, and my way about the ship. I could steer as well as anyone on board. Neither was I afraid of abuse nor punishment. It was an altogether different atmosphere from that on the Blue-nose barque.

All the sails were furled to the lower topsails and main upper topsail, so that the wooden square-rigger lay wallowing in the trough of the sea, waiting, and apparently helpless, without sails to drive her on. Later in the night, away to the southeast, the black clouds opened like the eye of some unearthly monster, and twittering stars glimmered through.

"There comes the blasted gale!" shouted an English sailor, and sure enough a North Atlantic storm, such as I had never seen, nor ever want

to see again under the same conditions, closed in upon the ship with such squeezing, breathless rage, that it reeled her upon her beam-ends, and held her there in the storm god's vice.

The captain, although gasping for the life that was soon to desert him, felt, like the true sailor he was, that he was good for one more fight with the elements, and lashed himself to the weather-rail of the poop-deck, taking charge of the ship, the crew, and the night. Oh, how I longed to have the power to defy the wind and waves as he did! How unselfish he looked there, with the seas, green seas, roaring over him, his sunken eyes bright with courage, shouting out his orders fore and aft the ship between spasms of coughing, with never a thought of his poor old diseased body.

"Put your helm down," he cried to me at the wheel.

When the gale struck the ship it caught her on the beam. The yards were braced sharp on the port tack, and it seemed as though she'd never come up to the wind. The main upper topsail, bellied and stiff from the force of the gale, was pressing her down till the lee bulwark rail was

under water. The captain's voice sounded again :

“Let the main upper topsail go by the run.”

As the yard came crashing down, the moaning and hissing wind in the rigging lent an uncanny feeling to the night. I trembled as I stood with my hands on the spokes of the wheel. My mind was busy, for unfortunately I had time to think. I wondered if my mother were praying for me; and I missed her so that had I known, as I believe now, that her not seeing me for so long a time cut short her days on earth, I would have prayed then, to the noise of the storm, to be forgiven.

Still the wind raged, and still the old captain, lashed over there to windward of me, fought for his ship.

As the buntlines closed in on the topsail, the ship slowly came up into the wind. We were saved for the time being, but the seas kept coming higher. They washed the deck-load of lumber away. One of the life-boats was carried away, the other was in danger. We'd only two boats left. A sailor commenced to swear, and I thought he'd never stop. He told us that the “bloody old hooker's” back was “broke,” and

demanded of Heaven and Hell to know what was to happen next. Towards daylight the sea was a mass of swirling foam, the storm was growing worse.

Then we took in the fore and mizzen lower topsails, and hove her to under the main lower topsail. The captain stayed at his post, cautioning the man at the wheel from time to time. It was now nearly eight hours since he had taken his post, and he continued there without relief for hours more, while I, young and hardy as I was, was grateful for relief and a cup of hot coffee at the end of two hours of that awful strain at the wheel.

The carpenter's report, when he sounded the ship, was gloomy.

"Four feet of water in the hold, sir," I heard him tell the captain.

"Keep the pumps going, the storm will break shortly. It is just a little equinoctial disturbance." And he told the steward to serve the men a glass of grog.

My opinion of the men who command ships was formed then and there. I realized, as I do now, how little the world knows of these men,

or of what they have given to Progress.

We weathered the storm, and sunshine and blue skies were soon ours again. The thought of a pay-day in Liverpool, and a trip home to see my mother filled me with joy. Like all good sailors, I forgot the agonies we had passed through. The ship was water-logged. Four hundred miles from Liverpool, a Western Ocean steamer took us in tow, and docked the ship for us without further trouble.

Strange to relate, the old captain lived until he had delivered the ship to her owners, and not much longer. He had to be taken off her in an ambulance to the hospital, where he died that day. Strange also to relate, the ship died too, for that very night the Queen's Dock caught fire, and she was destroyed.

There is a vague superstition among masters that it is not the best of luck to take out a ship whose previous master had her many years and died on the last voyage. However this may be, some years later I was offered the command of an old barkentine—the *Tam-O'-Shanter*, I think she was—whose master had just died. I accepted, got my things aboard, and then backed out, for no

reason except that I had such a feeling as many of us have experienced, that I should not go. Captain Donnelly took her, and his wife and two daughters went with him. They were never heard from again.

Although my pay for the voyage did not amount to much (three pounds I think it was) I was in high glee, and about to take the night boat for Ireland, when I discovered that someone had stolen my money. I learned that it was one of my own shipmates. I was in a strange city without a penny. The men of the crew, lost in the city crowd, were of no help to me now. Oh, how I damned, and still damn, the sailor who steals from a shipmate! I couldn't go home, nor could I write for money, or say that I was in Liverpool and wouldn't come home. I did what I thought best—not write at all, so that mother would never know that I was so close to her.

Once again I hunted up a sailor's boarding-house.

CHAPTER XI

THE LIME-JUICER, ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW

THE pierhead sailor's boarding-house, known as Kelley's, on Pike Street, was always open for hard-up sailors. There I went, and they took me to board with the stipulation that I would ship on anything that carried sail, at a moment's notice. Like all the others, it was a starvation house; but should Mrs. Kelley like you she would always give you a cup of tea in the afternoon. With meals it was first come first served, as long as the spuds held out.

The sailors who stopped there were a miserable-looking bunch of men, starved-looking, with their clothes in tatters. It was only by the merest chance that the master or mate of a ship would take any of them. Consequently, being a place of last resort, Kelley's came to be known as the "Pierhead Jump House." When a ship sailed that was, or was likely to be, short-handed, Kelley had his men lined up ready on the wharf,

and the mate, not daring to sail short-handed, would hastily pick and take what he was short of.

I was one week at the boarding-house when my turn came for the pierhead jump. I had been hoping to get away, for I did not have the courage to write to my mother on account of my father's taunt; yet it was hard to stay on so near home. The sea held no terrors for me now, and I loved it more than ever.

A Dundee ship, one of the Lock Line, was sailing that morning for San Francisco. Kelley, as usual, had his bunch lined up. The mate, a wiry, cunning Scotchman, jumped ashore and looked them over. He was short one man. There were fifteen of us.

"Are you a sailor?" he asked me.

"Yes, sir," I answered, eagerly.

"Have you any discharges?"

"I have one, sir."

"This is from Quebec to Liverpool. That doesn't show that you are a sailor."

My heart sank. Nevertheless he finally chose me, probably because I was the youngest and would be the easier to train. Kelley waved me

good-by. He had two months in wages in advance, and I had three shillings.

We warped the ship out of the dock. Then the tugboat took us down the Mersey, and we were out and away to sea on one of the longest voyages I ever made. The ship was three-masted and square-rigged, with a steel hull. She carried twenty-two men before the mast—the carpenter, sailmaker, three mates, a darkey steward, and an English cook.

She was a real lime-juicer. Everything we had to eat was weighed out, and our water was measured. The captain was fat and religious. He sang hymns and played on the small organ in his cabin most of the time. The crew represented practically every nation on earth.

I learned to fight on board that ship, for there were some tough men in the forecastle—a Dago, whose chief desire when he got mad was to throw a knife at you; a whale of a Hollander who thought he could whip anyone; a Dane who claimed that he had made John L. Sullivan take water. I must not forget the Greek, who believed in being forearmed, and carried a sharp-pointed marlin-spike slung around his neck.

After the tug-boat and pilot had left us we struck a blow. It was fair wind out of the English Channel. Although under upper topsails she soon cleared the land, and ripped away southard into fine weather, where I felt my first breath of the trade winds. If there is one place in the world for Romance, it is under tropical skies in a sailing-ship. That's the sailor's Paradise. There he builds his castles, and echoes from the past mingle with his thoughts of some pretty girl in a faraway seaport. Sailors get sentimental when the trade winds blow. They are more cleanly in their habits there than in the northern and southern latitudes. It is in the night watches, when the moon shines full and balmy winds fan the sails, that they spin their best yarns of shipwrecks, and sweethearts and hard-shelled mates. They are Neptune's children, as harmless as their boasts, and as flighty as the flying-fish that skim the dark waters.

The Channel winds blew us into the northeast trades; then, with every sail set that could catch the breeze, we sailed on south, and away for Cape Horn. The sea-biscuits weren't bad, but we always looked forward to Thursday and Sun-

day, when we got a pound loaf of flour bread. The salt horse and lime-juice were sparingly served, but we were all forced to drink the juice to avoid getting scurvy.

The big Hollander bossed the fo'c'sle. How I longed for Liverpool Jack to trim him, and how often I wondered whether I should ever see my friend again! I had been away from home now six months, and in that time I had learned more about human nature than I could have had I lived twenty years in Ireland. I felt responsibility, and had confidence in what I knew about a ship; but I had much yet to learn of the waves and the winds, and of the minds of deep-water sailors.

One night as we were nearing the Equator the middle watch from twelve to two was my wheel. The Dutchman claimed that I ate one of his sea-biscuits before going to relieve the helmsman. This particular piece of hardtack he was saving to make cracker hash on the following morning. I stoutly denied it, and just to show his brutal authority, he knocked me down with a swing of his powerful fist. I got up hurt and revengeful. On my way aft to the wheel the third mate no-

ticed the blood dripping from my mouth, and wanted to know who had caused it.

"I don't like that brute," he whispered, "and I'll show you how you can whip him. I'll train you, and by the time we're off Cape Horn you'll be ready."

I hurried off to the wheel, happy in the thought that I had found another champion. The third mate had boxing gloves, which he knew how to handle. He taught me how to box, how to swing for the Dutchman with a knockout, as well as uppercuts, right and left hooks, and a powerful swing from the hip, which he thought necessary to bring the Dutchman to the deck.

In the meantime the Dane and the Dutchman came together. That was one Sunday afternoon when we were sailing south of the Equator. The fight started over the Dane's washing his clothes in the Dutchman's whack of fresh water. Fresh water was a luxury to drink, let alone washing dirty clothes in it. The fat and religious captain was as usual singing, and playing his Sunday hymns; the sailors were lying around the deck, and the southeast trades were cooing in the rigging. The gentle roll of the ship was ideal

for the occasion. I was particularly interested in this fight, and was hoping that the Dane would give the Dutchman the licking of his life—the Dutchman for some reason, perhaps because he had injured me, hated me, and made my life in the fore-castle as miserable as he could.

They stripped to the waist. What hairy creatures they were! More like animals than men. They fought like two massive bears, hugging and trying to squeeze the life out of each other. They knew nothing about boxing or real fighting. I could see as the fight went on that the Dane was beginning to show yellow. He missed a few of his awkward swings, then fell to the deck, exhausted. The Hollander came out victorious, but neither was hurt very badly. The third mate was not supposed to see the fight—his duty should have been to stop it—but he managed to be near, and took it all in, carefully noting, for my future benefit, the Dutchman's weaknesses, and assuring me that when I had learned the pivot-wallopp I should be able to conquer my enemy. This was good news indeed, and I set about my further training with zest.

CHAPTER XII

THE HENS, THE COOK, THE STORM AND THE FIGHT

THE captain had for his own private use a dozen hens on board. Occasionally one would lay an egg. These were royal eggs, and could only be eaten by the master. To find an egg when one cleaned the coop was to bring cheer to the commander's heart. The weather was cold now, and the hens were timid about laying eggs. Here is where my story of the fight with the Dutchman begins.

We were to the "southard" and "westard" of the Falkland Islands and almost in the latitude of Cape Horn, but far from being around it. It was then the beginning of summer. The days were long, the winds were becoming threatening and cold. The sea looked boisterous and defiant, with its long deep rolling swell from the southwest.

One morning the bosun ordered me to clean

out the hen-coop, and to gather in the eggs, should there be any. The captain, complaining about the eggs, said he wondered if someone had not been stealing them.

The chicken-coop was in a spare room in the midships house. While I was scrubbing in there, the big Dutchman stuck his head into the door and shouted: "You're the damned thief that has been stealing the eggs!" The mate heard him, and came running to the chicken-coop. The captain was walking the poop, and seeing his first mate take on more speed than usual, and wondering what all the noise around the chicken-house might be, hurried off the poop and joined the mate.

"This is the man who has been stealing the eggs," cried the Dutchman. "I saw him just now sucking one."

The mate raved and swore, and the captain took it very much to heart. How dare anyone eat his hen's eggs? I pleaded, declaring that the Hollander was a liar and a cur, and that I didn't steal the eggs. The Dutchman foamed with rage, and said he'd beat me to a jelly.

The captain believed the Dutchman, and as

punishment he fined me one month's pay. I cleaned the coop. The captain and mate walked off. I could hear the captain say: "I knew those hens were laying all the time." I, who knew more about hens than I did about the Lord's Prayer, was well aware of the effect of cold weather upon laying hens, and felt that the captain would find out sometime that hens either cannot or will not lay eggs in iceberg weather.

The Dutchman was waiting for me around the fore part of the forecastle.

"Now," said he, "I am going to give you a whipping that you will never forget."

In spite of the third mate's instructions not to lose my temper, in view of my recent trouble I found it hard to remain cool. I faced him, grinning with rage, and said: "Come on, you Dutch hound! It is you who will get the whipping."

He rushed for me as if he would swallow me up. I sidestepped and caught him on the eye. My greatest difficulty was in not allowing him to get hold of me. If this should happen it was all off with me. Back he came at me like an uncaged lion, with his fists flying in front of him. The crew gathered around approvingly, to see a

boy not yet nineteen holding his own with a man so much more experienced, and at least fifty pounds heavier.

I caught him again, this time on the mouth, knocking a tooth out, and injuring my hand, which had a sickening effect on me. But I had him groggy, and all that was needed was to give him a swing from my hip to bring him to the deck. He rushed me, like all cowards, with his head down, and his black eyes closed. I heard a voice, the third mate's:

“Put it to him now.”

I upper-cut him first, then when he lifted his head swung for him and the big lying Dutchman lay crumpled on the deck.

“Now you can take care of yourself on any ship,” said the third mate, as he bandaged my hand. I have done it, on more than one occasion. I only wish that social liars and evil-doers were as easily handled as are bullies and liars in the stratum of society in which sailors move!

The Dutchman made many threats as to what he would do to me some dark night, but I had him cowed and he knew it. I was respected in

the forecastle, and could grab the first chunk of salt-horse and get away with it.

About a week later we struck a Cape Horn blizzard, and, while I had thought it blew hard off the Newfoundland Banks, that was a mild storm compared to this one. Gale, hail, snow and sleet we had. Hours we spent reefing the icy topsails, clumsy in our clothes, and cold, and sure that if our stiffened fingers slipped there was a quick grave awaiting us. The seas looked larger to me than the mountains in Ireland. The ship had no buoyancy. Her cargo was Scotch whiskey, ale, and porter, and it lay heavy in her bowels. Seas flooded her fore and aft, and lifelines were rigged on the deck for the crew to work ship.

It was hard to get any response from the cook these days. He refused to bake our cracker-hash, which any cook should do, since it represents to a sailor the final good derived from faithful saving of crumbs. The bean-soup was beyond assimilation, and only a sailor with a shark's stomach could get away with it. There was hardly a spot on the cook's face that was not covered with red blotches.

The God of the Sea chooses well for the sailor. The cook was removed from the ship the following day.

It was Sunday, and five o'clock in the morning. The gale had not abated, nor had the sea decreased in mountain volume. Storm trysails and lower topsails were the sails she carried. The wind and waves were a point abaft the starboard beam. The seas had a raking sweep at the decks fore and aft the ship. The cook's galley acted as a sea-wall for the Cape Horn combers.

Two bells, five o'clock, rang the man at the fo'c'sle-head, and as the rolling tones died away in the crisp morning air we shipped a sea, a rolling green, white-capped comber; and when the decks were clear again we missed the cook, the galley, and the captain's hens. That was the end of the red-spotted cook!

Six long weeks we fought the weather off Cape Horn. Hungry and cold, we struggled with the ship, never giving an inch. Icebergs and gales we met and fought, and when the wind did blow fair for the Pacific Ocean I realized the truth of the sailor's saying, that Cape Horn is the place where Iron Seamen are made.

As the years drift by I can see that a Cape Horn training for our sailors to-day, nay, even for our business and society men, would make better men of the men, and men of the sissies, and perhaps help to perpetuate the strength of the human race.

CHAPTER XIII

BETTER WEATHER. LIVERPOOL JACK AGAIN.

I GO ASHORE

SAILORS are simple, light-hearted souls, on whom the load of yesterday is as light as possible to-day. With a favoring breeze we set all sail, and the sailors chatted and laughed like children. We sang chanteys as the yards went up, and our sufferings vanished with the cold. Soon we should be in the tropics again, and then hurrah for the Golden Gate and the Sacramento River!

The cook wasn't missed much, nor his cooking either. He would have died before we made port. We rigged up a temporary galley and found an old sailor who could cook pea-soup. The darkey steward made bread, anyone could boil salt-horse. And the old sailor's cooking was never questioned.

The captain grieved over his laying hens, but he still continued singing his favorite hymn:

“Come to thy Father, O wanderer, come!
Some one is praying for you.
Turn from the sin path, no longer to roam;
Some one is praying for you.
Some one loves you wherever you stray,
Bears you in faith to God, day after day,
Prayerfully follows you all the dark way.
Some one is praying for you.”

As we sailed northward into clearer skies, the winds from the palms of the South Sea Isles wove Beauty's dream of stars and moon

Just as surely as the Indian finds the wild violet amidst the cactus-roots, so the sea never fails to communicate with the soul that loves it through some form of its ever-changing emotion, whether in its destructive combers or its golden ripples. Its magnetism sounds lullaby in the heart of its lover, and makes bold the spirit of adventure. I must beg the reader's pardon for so often dwelling upon this, but I seem perpetually to struggle with only partially effective words to explain what I know is the rock foundation of the nature of the so-called “rolling-stone,” whose temperament oftentimes is far more reasonable and stable than the world in its casualness takes it to be.

So the days passed on, through glittering stars,

cooing winds, and Capricorn sunsets, and after four months and twenty-six days we dropped anchor off Goat Island in San Francisco Bay. I was a man and a sailor now, but shifty for new adventures in a country that offered every opportunity.

While we were lying at anchor, even before the ship went to the wharf to unload, crimps came on board, unhindered, by some ancient custom, and insisted upon many of the crew leaving, offering them higher wages if they would sail aboard the American ships. We had signed articles for the round trip in England, and any money a sailor got ashore at San Francisco was optional with the captain. If the sailor were dissatisfied and left the ship at that port, he sacrificed his pay for the entire voyage.

I refused to go with any of the crimps, but remained by the ship until she docked, which pleased the third mate very much. He had taught me all he knew about navigation, and was proud of my battling qualities as well. (By the way, the Dutchman had left the ship with the first of the boarding-house crimps.)

When the ship docked, I went aft to the cap-

tain and asked him for some money to spend. He grudgingly gave me fifty cents, told me not to spend it all in one night, and promised me another fifty cents the following Saturday. After five months in a lime-juice ship fifty cents to spend ashore in one week! Surely one's morals were safe. Steam beer was selling two mugs for five cents on Pacific Street, and whiskey five cents a drink on the Barbary Coast. That may sound wonderful indeed to our prohibitionized ears, but the stuff was almost as dangerous then as it would be now at that price.

The captain's injustice so hurt me that I left the ship, and now for a time my tale must follow me ashore. A crimp soon had me in tow and took me to a sailor's boarding-house, where, after a few days, I shipped aboard a whaler, to be gone for three years. They pictured to me the beauties of the Arctic Ocean, the icebergs, the musk-ox, the gorgeous Aurora Borealis, and particularly the grand pay I should get from my share in the whale, pay which was supposed to run well up into the thousands by the end of the voyage. The same old story has lured thousands of good men into an industry where Greed makes

fortunes for a few, and keeps thousands of men cold, cheerless and overworked for years, only to release them penniless in the end. I was ignorant, or I never should have signed on.

My bag was already aboard the whaler when someone behind me spoke: "Get your bag, and come back on the wharf."

Somewhere I had heard that voice before.

"Come on, now, get aboard that ship; none of your lallygagging," cried the crimp, fearing for his money.

I turned around in answer to the voice. It was Liverpool Jack. In all my seventeen years on and off the sea, he was the only sailor I ever met who knew how to trim a crimp. I dropped my bag and ran to him, shaking him warmly by the hand.

"Get aboard that ship," roared the crimp.

"Put your bag in the fo'c'sle," whispered Jack. "Then get back onto the wharf."

I was so happy to see him that I ignored his instructions. The result was that I was knocked down, and thrown aboard the whaler.

"There, damn you," bellowed the crimp. "Stay there, now."

I picked myself up, and jumped back onto the wharf, full of fight. Three of the boarding-house thugs rushed at me. The first I knocked down; the other two grabbed me, and were in the act of pitching me over the rail onto the hard deck when Liverpool Jack ran to my rescue. Oh, how he could fight! He knocked them right and left, and I, being free now, the three crimps were no match for us. We fought, and fought hard on that slivery wharf. The crimps wouldn't hesitate to kill you. They had police protection, and a sailor's life wasn't worth much in the old days in San Francisco.

They shouted to the mates aboard the whaler for help. Two burly men jumped onto the bulwark rail, but before they landed on the wharf I hit one and Jack the other, and they fell in-board. A crowd of longshoremen and sailors were gathering around. The crimps were groggy. They had no endurance for further fight. Jack shouted:

"Let's run for it before it is too late!"

He headed up the wharf on a dead run, I after him; and we were soon lost in the crowded street, but dangerously close to the water-front. "We'll

have to get out of the city," panted Jack. "Our lives aren't safe now."

We boarded a Mission Street car, and rode well out into the country to the end of the line. We hunted a quiet place, and yarned till the sun set and the misty dampness of 'Frisco Bay sent a chill through us. Then we got up and walked on into the night.

It was fifty miles from San Francisco to San José. Our course along the country road pointed to that city. The December weather was snappy and a white frost made its appearance on the housetops and glittered like fool's gold in the rays of the half moon.

As we plodded on we talked of our experiences since we had separated at Chicoutimi. Jack arrived in Montreal a few days after he left me, and finding shipping quiet there, beat it down to Quebec and shipped on a vessel bound for Valparaiso. As usual he didn't like the ship and left her there. After living there for a month or more doing odd jobs at longshoring, he found a barque bound for San Francisco, and had been there for seven weeks when I met him. There were many opportunities to ship aboard a whaler,

but Jack had a horror of whalers. It seemed to me that sometime in his younger life he probably had been shanghaied on one of them.

We were in a country now which I had been told was God's Country, where nature abounded in everything for the needy, and wages were high. Little I dreamed, as I walked along that night, that I was living in the panic of 1893, and that Hunger's skeleton grinned at me as I passed the milestones. Wages of fifteen dollars a month were not for such men as I, that year, when even sturdy, steady, domestic laborers found it hard to get work.

Jack and I, heedless of the currents and reefs that we were steering into, hiked on, and at two o'clock in the morning walked into Redwood City, tired and hungry. The town was small in those days. A few lights glimmered through the trees. A dog or two barked at our approach, and steeled the night policeman to action. To be sure he was well armed, having his night stick, and a gun strapped at his side. He headed straight for us, his club in his hand.

"Where are you hoboes going?" he shouted.

"We're bound for San Diego," answered Jack.

"Well, keep a-moving," he said. "You ain't a-goin' to find San Diego in these parts."

We walked along a little farther, when Jack suddenly stopped short. "Listen," he whispered. Then I could hear the chug, chug of a locomotive down in the freight yard.

"Come on," said he, "we'll walk no more, we'll ride in a freight car to San Diego."

I believe that Jack knew that San Diego was in California, but in what part of California I am sure he did not know. I myself am not good at directions except at sea, and in its nearest parallel, the desert, and I have often noticed how free and easy other sailors are with distance on land. Jack knew, however, that wherever San Diego might be it was a seaport, and assured me with happy confidence that only the best ships left there!

An old nightwatchman in the freight yards told us that a freight was leaving for Fresno shortly, and that there were many empty box-cars in it. We crawled into one, and hid away in a dark, smelly corner, and were off—unfared passengers, cold and hungry.

We must have slept for a long time, when the

door opened letting in the sun and an unwelcome brakeman.

"Where in Hell are you 'boes going?" he roared.

"San Diego," answered Jack, rubbing his eyes.

"Have you any money?"

"Not a damned cent."

"Well, get off the train before I throw you off."

"I have a dollar," said I; but Jack shook my shoulder, and announced his intention of getting off, saying airily that he needed to stretch his legs anyway. As we alighted among the vineyards—for we had ridden far on that freight train—the brakeman swore in disappointment that we, and not he, still had our last dollar.

There was a little town amid the vineyards, a cozy little town, with its church and blacksmith shop, looking all new and shiny in the sun; and, better for us, a Chinese restaurant. There half the dollar fed us heartily, and turned our outlook upon life into gold also. We were not far from Fresno, we were told, and there was no work to be had. The Democrats, under Cleveland, the local gossips said, had bankrupted the country, and the farmers were facing starvation. The

only salvation for the country lay with the Populist Party. What a pity that the very men who need to hear reasonable discussion are the farthest removed from any opportunity to listen to it!

I began to long for the roll of a ship and the spray from the deep. I seemed to be going from bad to worse, with fifty cents in my pocket and gloom ahead. When I suggested going back, even if it involved shipping on a whaler, Jack only laughed. Going without a few meals was nothing to him, and beating his way on trains, I discovered, was actually a source of joy. Ships to him were only a means of conveyance to leave lands where adventure had become monotonous.

We learned that there would be a freight train that afternoon for the south. I left Jack, who never walked for pleasure, to take a country stroll. I walked through the vineyards and saw white men and Japanese pruning the vines. The work looked nice, and I felt that I could do it if only I had a job.

When I got back I saw that Jack had been drinking, although it was hard to tell how he could have got it; and when the train came in,

and the brakeman warned us off it unless we had money to give him, Jack, more courageous after drinking than I was sober, shouted to me as the train swung past, to "catch the gunnels"; and himself suited the action to the word by swinging under and up to rest on the "gunwales"—the longitudinal rods which are placed close to the ground under the cars.

While I stood passively by, unable to compass this process sufficiently quickly to follow suit, the train gathered speed, Jack waved his hand to me, and was gone. Into space for another span of years!

CHAPTER XIV

BENEFIT OF CLERGY—NEW STYLE

“Where Duty Whispers Low, ‘Thou Must’—The
Youth Replies, ‘I Can’ ”—But That Does
Not Apply To Vines.

FEELING now more alone than I had felt in Canada, I turned aimlessly and headed off into the country. Presently I came to a lane, and to a farm house, and to a man milking cows, chewing tobacco as he milked. His hairy head was buried in the cow's flank, and his boots were crusted with manure. As I approached him, asking if he were the farmer, a girl called from the back porch:

“Father, mother says that you are to be sure to leave enough milk for the calf.”

He grunted. “Yes, Ellen.” Then, looking at me out of the corners of his eyes: “Well, suppose I be the farmer here, what do you want?”

“A job,” said I, brazenly.

“Young feller, I ain't got work enough for myself to do, let alone hiring a man.”

"I must have work," said I, desperately. "I'm broke and I've got to earn some money. I know you have work for me to do as long as you have grapes to prune. I can milk cows, too, and I'll work cheap."

He looked me over from my shoes up. While I wasn't clean, I was respectable-looking. He handed me a tin bucket.

"Milk old Muley, there by the gate," he said, and I milked old Muley in a hurry. I stripped her clean, for having been raised on a farm, milking was second nature to me.

"Have you another one?" I asked eagerly, handing him the bucket.

"No," he growled, picking up the buckets and starting for the house, "but stay here till I come back, I may have some work for you to do. I'll talk to Ma."

I waited, and hoped, and prayed, for a job.

Then the farmer's voice sounded from the house: "Come on here, stranger."

His wife, a short fat woman, but rather neat in her gingham dress, greeted me with, "How did you come to be broke?" I told her the whole thing, as a boy would. It seemed ages since I

had been in a home. The girl, about seventeen years old, and good-looking, was listening in the pantry.

Evidently the mother approved of me. At any rate she was the boss of that farm, as was plain to see. "I can give you a week's work," she said, "but mind you, I can't pay much. Fifty cents a day and board."

"I'll take it," I said, cheerfully.

We had supper together, I leading in the conversation. The food wasn't bad, considering the time. Potatoes and bread and tea there were, plenty, and a slice of fried bacon for each one. Then there were stewed pears for dessert.

The farmer made a bed for me in the barn with the cows and horses, and I went to sleep, but fitfully, for however pleasant the noises and stampings and barkings of farm animals may be to a farm-lad, they are very different from the voices of the sea, and the cobwebbed rafters of a barn, loomy and spaceful as they are, release one too suddenly from the oppression of the ship's forecastle ceiling.

At four o'clock he called to me: "Get up and milk the cows."

"Where's the pump?" I inquired, turning out.

"What do you want the pump for, this time of the morning?"

"I want to wash my head and face."

"You'll find it on the porch," he mumbled.

"I don't wash till breakfast time."

I doubted that he did then, as he was never either washing or washed when I saw him, and I'm quite sure that he couldn't have combed his hair even if he had tried.

One week I spent working around the barn and stables cleaning them out. It seemed that it had been many months since they had been touched by the hand of man. I afterwards found that some farmers prefer to move their barns, rather than cart the manure away. Then they buy fertilizer for the land.

The girl and I became fast friends, which I could see did not please the mother, who grew colder and colder at meals.

"Can you prune grapes?" asked the farmer one evening, after I had earned three dollars in the Land of the Golden Gate.

"Oh, yes," said I. "I can do anything."

This utterance proved my downfall. I had

never pruned grape vines, but I had seen the Japs and others do it, and it seemed to me that all that was necessary was to clip off the long trailing vines.

Next morning he gave me the pruning shears, and with a wave of the hand started me in on the thirty or more acres he had to prune. I started in with a will, hoping to show my appreciation of his giving me work, and slashed right and left, pruning close to the vines without regard for bud or balance. Towards noon my master came to see how I was doing, and, to my dismay, swore he'd have me shot. So violent was his rage, and the anguish of his wife, who mourned the day that ever she had befriended me, that I was grateful for the three dollars I had earned and a drink from the pump.

This much better off than I had been a week ago, and with some knowledge of how not to prune, I waved my hat to the girl, and started up the main road, reflecting upon my fortune. To this day I laugh when I think of that adventure, and my utter meekness about it. Many years later I was invited to do pruning in the vineyard of a lady who ran her own ranch, and

refused to allow me to stay there unless I would work for her. Tempted as I was, I ran no risks.

"Madam," I said, "ask me to dig for you, or carry wheat for you, or milk your cows—or even die for you if necessary, but do not ask me to prune grape-vines."

"You are very firm," said she.

"I am," said I; "at any sacrifice."

My wife, reading over my shoulder, laughs aloud at this. "Why didn't you tell me then?" she asks. "You don't know how foolish I thought you were."

"There's pruning and pruning," I answer, "and I feared the worse evil." There is an answer from her, but not worth while to mention!

How to get to a seaport was my next problem, for I had made up my mind that the sea was the place for me. I was about as close to San Francisco as I was to San Diego. I walked to the village, and sat down upon a pile of railroad ties to ponder the past and speculate upon the future. For Youth, out of a job, pondering the past has prickles and thorns of thought; the future is refuge. For Age, doing the same thing, by-gones are apt to be by-gones, but the thought of the

future in the light of history is a curse to failing muscles.

I was beginning to believe that I had made a fatal mistake. I should never have left home. My mother was the truest friend that I'd ever know. I couldn't have her here, and I doubted if in this strange country of barking dogs and selfish people, I could ever make a go of it. I resolved then and there to follow Liverpool Jack to San Diego, and there to try to ship for England. A comforting thought, but by no means to be borne out in the event.

Suddenly there was a shout from behind me. Turning quickly, I saw five men coming towards me.

"Where are you going, Bo?" one of them cried.

They were unshaven, dirty, and ragged, and their shoes were worn soleless.

"I am bound for San Diego," I said, glad of their cheerfulness.

"Keep away from there," said the tallest of the men. "We've just come from there. I'm here to tell you it's the hungriest part of the state." Then he told me their story, while the others pulled themselves up to the pile of ties, or

stood around commenting. They couldn't find work anywhere, and little of anything to eat. One had a wife and children back east. For the sake of a sick little one he had come west to find a home for them all, and he hadn't the nerve to write how dismally he had failed. Had names meant anything to me then, I should have been interested in that man's name, for it was well known. So it is in the west, one cannot judge from appearances at all. A longshoreman I knew afterwards became one of the most influential of United States senators, and a woman who took in washing in my day became one of what used to be called New York's Four Hundred.

The narrow waists and long cheek-bones of these five men lent corroboration to their statement that they were half-starved, and I could not sit there with money in my pocket and see men hungry to vagueness. I invited them to go to the China Restaurant, and then and there got the worth of my three dollars. If I were never to eat a meal again the smile of soul-appreciation that came into their emaciated faces was reward enough. Besides, to-morrow was another day,

and it was well to approach it in good condition.

They declined to accept the invitation to the China Restaurant as being an imposition, but took two of my three dollars to buy food to cook. The tall one ran to the village store. The others rustled cans in which to cook, and started a fire. In less than an hour they were eating, and what a meal they had! Potatoes, bread, steak, and coffee. They invited me to eat with them. I watched them eat, for I wasn't hungry. My stomach wasn't empty, and I got pleasure out of watching them fill theirs—a pleasure that more thrifty people cannot feel, for they have no last dollar.

With their waist-lines filled, the talk of my guests became more optimistic. The tall one spoke:

“Do you see that church over there?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Men like ourselves are always sure of a dollar from the priest who lives there. But here's the trouble,” and he licked his lips,, “you've got to put on the gloves and box with him or you don't get anything. He's mighty handy with the mitts.”

"Did you try him out?" I asked, with interest.

"Nothing doing. I met a man down the road a piece who said he took the beating of his life for a silver dollar, and he sure looked it."

Towards evening a north-bound freight pulled in, and stopped. The five men said good-by, and as she started to move, like the professionals they were, grabbed hold of the gunwales and slid under the train as if they were going to bed. They were off, and I was alone again—alone with one silver dollar.

I thought of the priest and the possibility of getting another dollar. I certainly could use one. I walked over to the church, and there, sitting on the steps, was the priest, a very burly priest indeed. He could see, I suppose, what I was after, for he jumped to his feet, stretched, and felt his muscles. I took this for a warning destined to inspire anyone with terror, automatically sorting out the sheep from the goats, so to speak.

I wished him a good evening, and he asked me what I wanted.

"I want to earn a dollar."

"Come right in here, my boy," and he led me into a small house that adjoined the church.

In a room that was not much larger than eight by ten, he stopped. I pulled off my coat without a word, while he ostentatiously juggled some dumb-bells.

Then: "You are sure that you want to tackle me?" he inquired.

I should have liked to say no, but I wanted his dollar so badly that it was worth a beating to me. I assured him that I was ready.

He handed me the gloves, and put his on without comment or question. We squared away. He caught me a wallop on the ear and I went down. When I got upon my feet again I forgot all about the dollar I was earning and the man who wore the broadcloth. I felt that I was back on a ship, and I wasn't going to lose a fight.

I caught him on the jaw and staggered him, following it up with an uppercut that knocked him down. When he got up he was bleeding freely, and science lost its art. He started slugging. Here was where I shone. I whipped him, and whipped him well, and until he cried enough.

As if nothing had happened, he took me to a sink where I washed my blood and his blood off me. Then he wished me good-by and Godspeed with apostolic dignity, and my reward was not one dollar—but five!

CHAPTER XV

MORE TROUBLE—THE HOG BUSINESS

IT was dark now, and the air cold. I crawled into an empty box car that stood on a side track. I must have slept, for I awoke with a start as another car struck the one in which I was. Then the whole thing started to move. I was off on a train, I didn't know where. Through the night I looked out of the side door, but couldn't tell whether we were headed north or south. No one bothered about me. I doubt if the brakeman knew I was there. It was noon the next day when I crawled out of the car. I discovered that I was headed north, and guessed that I was near Sacramento, and about seven hundred miles north of San Diego, which proved to be true.

"Well," thought I, "I'll have to make the best of it. I am ninety miles from San Francisco, and that is some satisfaction." Poor Jack's horror of whaling ships and his language about

them and all that belonged to them arose within me, and the thought of the fighting crimps made me wish I were anywhere else.

But hunger often rules our destinies, and I was hungry. The train had stopped at a siding, and there was no town in sight. I walked off, and followed a country road, where I saw a man ahead of me driving a sorrel horse hitched to a wagon with milk-cans in the back. I overtook him and spoke to him, asking if he knew of any chance to work in the neighborhood.

He pulled up the reins, and shouted in clear Irish brogue:

“Whoa, there, Jerry!”

“Can ye milk cows?” he asked, looking down on me, and there was something about him that took me back to Ireland, almost breathlessly.

“Yes, I can,” I said.

“Jump up on the wagon thin,” he commanded. “The job I’ll be givin’ yez won’t be much,” he went on, “but if you’re broke you ought to be glad of anything.”

He jerked on the reins, gave Jerry a cut with the whip, and we were off to O’Donnell’s farm, this being the land of my new master. He was

past sixty, white-haired, wrinkled-faced, his hands showing the toil of years, his upper lip long, broad, and sadly humorous, frequently lifting to show a mouth almost destitute of teeth.

We pulled up at his farm, if a farm you would call it. A small barn and the house where he lived comprised the buildings on the place. Ten acres of land were the farm, and a few hungry cows the visible stock. We unhitched Jerry, putting him away in a dirty stall, with a forkful of hay for his dinner, for which he thanked me gratefully with a nicker.

Then I went into the shack where O'Donnell was cooking. It was a large bare dirty room, without partitions. On the table he was carving a large boiled beef-heart that had not been recently cooked. "A foine meal for a healthy man," he said. Boiled heart, bread, and skimmed milk. He informed me that he always said grace before meals, and proceeded to do so. Although there was not much on the table to be grateful for, I echoed his "amen" loudly and thankfully. I was hungry, and the bread and heart disappeared like snow before a summer sun,

"Now," said O'Donnell, wiping his mouth on the oil-cloth cover, "I'll tell ye what I'll be wantin' ye to do. There's fifteen cows to milk, and I'll help you some. You get up in the mornin' about three o'clock and start to milk. By four o'clock, we'll have it in the cans, then I drive to town and deliver to my customers. I'm back here by nine o'clock. The reason that I'm late to-day is that I've been dickering with a man about buying hogs."

"Oh, you're going into the hog business?" said I, pushing back from the table.

"Yes I'm thinking about it. There's money in hogs these days, and I have a fine place for them. But to get back to your work. As I said, I get home about nine o'clock. While I'm gone you'll do the chores, clean out the cow barn, and turn the cows out to pasture. It isn't much grass that's in the field, but shure they get the exercise."

"Now, me bye," he concluded, getting up from the table, "after you have finished, water the little roan horse, he's in the stall in the north end of the barn. I'll be home be the time you have the work done."

I was just congratulating myself upon not being asked to do what I didn't know how to do, when he turned around, saying:

"Howld on, me boy, do you know how to drive a team?"

This was no time for unmanly weakness. I gulped hard, as I assured him that I did, for it was not the fact. However I found afterwards that I could do it very well. He went on to tell me that he had bought a lot of hop-poles from a man who had a yard down by the Sacramento River, and that he was hauling them to sell to a Chinese laundry. This would be part of my work, and I should be paid twenty dollars a month for it.

How easily some human beings are satisfied, and how little it takes of the sunshine of life to make them happy! I felt that now I had found a friend in this strange old man. He told me a great deal about his business, and rather hinted that I go into partnership with him in the hog business. It seemed that there was money in these dirty creatures. Anyway, it would be a start in this new country, and I wrote home and told my mother how well I was getting along,

and how prosperous I should be some day, thinking how delighted she would be over my fine prospects, quite regardless of the present truth of it.

We did become partners in the hog business, and in the three months that I worked for O'Donnell my wages went with his money to increase the stock over the sixty hogs we already had; and as things looked brighter I even neglected my clothes to save money. I wasn't presentable, but that didn't matter, for was I not going to make a lot of money right away? Then I planned, I should branch out for myself on a large scale.

My work these days seemed never to be done, what with milking, feeding the stock, hauling wood to the China Laundry, and taking O'Donnell evenings to the small neighboring towns, where he made impassioned stump speeches for the Populist Party.

He was very particular about his speeches, and Sundays were devoted to rehearsing them in the barn, the acoustics in the shack being considered inadequate. At least in the barn we had an appreciative audience, for every strophe was

punctuated by a chorus of moos, brays, whinnies and cackles.

"I shtand here to-night before yez, Min," he would commence, "a praycher in the cause av the People's Parrrty. From the tops av th' mountains to th' broad expanse av th' Pacific, let me words ring home th' missage!"

Our luck on these excursions varied. We were always sure of an audience, but not always sure of a flattering one. One night while O'Donnell was warming up to his subject, someone put a whistle under Jerry's tail. He ran away, and spilled us both out of the wagon. We had to walk eight miles home. O'Donnell seemed to think nothing of this. The cause was just, he said, there had to be martyrs, and that was the end of it.

Well I remember the last load of hop-poles that I hauled to the Chinaman's Laundry. I had gotten to know some of the Portuguese living in the bottom-lands of the Sacramento River, along which my road lay. Since it was the last load, Manuel Da Costa insisted that I take a drink with him of home-brewed Portuguese brandy, known in those parts as "jackass brandy."

He had been kind to me, helping me often to free the wagon wheels when they sank too deep into the soft river mud. To please him I took a drink, and then another, for it tasted good, and did not seem to have a kick to it. Then, bidding him good-by, I jumped into the wagon and drove off.

There was a freshet in the Sacramento River, and it ran foaming. After about a mile the jack-ass brandy took complete possession of me. Quickly and quietly it did its deadly work! Regardless of danger or icy chill, I decided that the river looked good to me, and without a moment's hesitation I climbed down, tied the horse, jumped fully clothed into the mad roaring river, and swam across it and then back again.

The icy water had no influence whatever on me, nor did I feel ashamed of myself until long after I had untied the horse, and headed, wet as I was, for the town. However, I never told O'Donnell, knowing full well his feelings on the subject of temperance. As time went on, and I realized how narrow had been my escape from drowning, I decided that never again would I be beguiled by jackass brandy.

It was a little over a year that I had been away from home, and my three months was drawing to a close, when it seemed that the time had come for expansion in the hog business. O'Donnell bought garbage and hauled it every morning from the city to feed the stock. They thrived on the feed, and in the muddy coolness of the ditch where they buried themselves. We were to kill ten of the heaviest in a few days to sell, and with the money buy shoats five weeks old to raise and fatten for the market.

It was time to commence to build castles, for six months more would give us substantial money. My castle took the form of a cozy little farm, and included a cozy little wife, too; for I was becoming much enamored of a red-haired lassie whose father raised strawberries. She liked me in spite of my clothes, and the way I had of talking to my pigs; and in spite, also, of her father, who informed her that I was nothing but seaweed that the storm blew in.

Nevertheless, I kissed her one day through the fence—a barbed-wire fence at that—and a thrill went through me, the like of which I had never known before. I began to long for the comple-

mentary companionship of her, and I thought of her sharing my days, and bringing my lunch to me at the plow.

How full of nothingness are dreams! They are but fading specters on a wasteless sea—the closer you sail to them the farther they are away. Two days after my kiss, the hog farm was in mourning. Every last one of the hogs died from hog cholera.

I dug holes for them, and covered them up where they lay, and as I buried them I felt embittered with the laws of human averages. Why should I be sacrificed when the sun was shining on Youth and Obedience. What had I done to merit this curse from Fate? Years afterwards, while sailing mate on a ship to the South Seas, I read in a magazine how to guard against hog cholera. Poor old O'Donnell and I knew nothing about vaccinating hogs, and I doubt if more than a few people in that neighborhood knew about it at that time.

The hogs were buried, and the sun had set on Youth and Old Age huddled together in the shack, each complaining after his fashion. We

supped together on beef heart and boiled potatoes, and when the candle burned low I blew it out and each went to his own bed, a shakedown of straw on the shack floor: O'Donnell to dream, perhaps, of the long ago when life was not a question of potatoes with or without beef heart, and held some hope for failing years; I to turn toward the morrow's dawn, when I should make a new start—not with hogs this time, but under flapping sails on windy seas, where the squeal from a swivel clock would soothe the squeal that echoed from lost hopes.

O'Donnell said good-by to me with some grief, and from out of his old soppy overalls fished nine dollars.

"Here, take this," he said. "If I had more I would gladly give it to you. You are not the bad sort of a lad."

I thanked him, and, with a heavy heart, left him to bid another good-by at the next farm. Walking across a field that I had recently plowed, the new soil had a longing-to-remain smell for me, an odor that took me back home to the spring-time of the year, when the plowing was being

done, and the beveled furrows crumbled under the sun heat of the day. They were crushing memories, and I felt them keenly.

As I squeezed through the barbed-wire fence and onto the farm of my sweetheart's father, O'Donnell called to me:

"I say, if you ever happen around here again I'll be glad to see you, but wherever you go spread the gospel of the People's Party."

I assured him that I would, whether on land or sea.

Mr. Curran, the girl's father, was hoeing strawberries.

"I hear that your hogs died," he snapped, as I approached him.

"Yes, every one of them."

"Well, I expected as much. It takes men to raise hogs."

He continued hoeing his strawberries. "What are you going to do now?" he asked presently.

"Oh," said I, pitifully, "I am going back to sea."

"I'm thinking that's the place for ye."

"I'm going to say good-by to your daughter, Ellen," said I, walking off towards the house.

He grunted assent like one of my dying sows. Ellen was there. She knew that I was leaving. Whatever her father had said about me, I knew that it was nothing good, but still she was fond of me.

"Ellen, I have come to say good-by. I had hopes of being able to stay, but you have heard about the hogs."

"Yes," she said, "I've heard nothing else around this house. Father said you'd sure have to go now."

I kissed her good-by, and there were tears in the eyes of both of us. We were too young to pledge ourselves to each other, and I never saw her again, but I am sure that Ellen made some lonely man happy. In reviewing the girls that I have known since then, I find that my wayward fancies leaned strongly toward red hair. Excepting, of course, wives—but let Time tell that tale!

CHAPTER XVI

THE LOYAL LEGION BUTTON, BALED HAY, AND JACKASS BRANDY AGAIN

THE railroad fare from Sacramento to San Francisco was two dollars and fifty cents. I bought a ticket and rode there, to the City of Crimps. I knew what to expect once I fell into their hands, but beggars can't be choosers, six dollars wouldn't last long, and sooner or later it would be a sailor's boarding-house for me, and then away to the ends of the earth on anything that carried sail.

When I got off the train in San Francisco I walked around like a stray dog smelling for sympathy. The street lights flickered in the evening shadows; the smell from Fourth Creek, where the city sewage emptied into Mission Flats, was thick and nauseating; coastwise schooners were discharging lumber in the creek, and that part of the city was as tough as the Barbary Coast.

There was a saloon at the corner of Fourth and Berry Streets which was owned by a Dane

whose Irish wife was bartender. It seemed odd to me that I chose this saloon to go into, and certainly Fate awaited me there, in the person of a man about sixty years old. As I entered he was in the act of raising a glass of whiskey to his lips, and immediately asked me to join him. I thanked him, and ordered a glass of steam beer.

He introduced himself as Captain Glass, now master of a bay scow. He was entering into a discussion of his merits in the most interested possible way, when a man in a Seymour coat tightly buttoned to the chin and a cap pulled down over his left eye, swaggered into the saloon, picked up the Captain's whiskey deliberately from the bar, and drank it. The Captain made a lunge at him with both fists, and missed him.

Then the crook, as deliberately as he had drunk the whiskey, knocked the old captain down onto the sawdust floor. As he lay there I could see a little copper button shining in the lapel of his pilot-cloth coat. I didn't know then what the little copper button meant, but a few minutes later I found out that he belonged to the Grand Army of the Republic, and had fought in the Civil War.

I wasn't going to let the crook get away with his rough stuff. One of mother's cardinal principles, in which she had thoroughly trained me, was respect for old age. The Irishwoman bartender dropped my beer, wailing, "Shure, an' where's policemen now? Oh you'll niver foind thim whin you want thim!"

I threw off my ragged coat and cap and flung them on the bar, then flew at the crook. I was so mad with rage that I forgot the training the third mate on the lime-juice ship had given me. I was knocked down twice before I realized that my present style of fighting favored the crook. Then I got into position, got my head, and gave him the whipping of his crooked life. To finish it right I picked him up, and carried him to the street and threw him in the gutter. Both my eyes were black, my nose was bleeding and my lip was cut.

The old Captain was on his feet again when I backed into the saloon, and helped me on with my coat. Three teeth were missing from his false set—he didn't know whether he had swallowed them or not; an egg-shaped bump was also developing on his right jaw. Willing as he was

to talk, he found difficulty in moving his jaws.

We had our drink in peace this time. He praised me for my good fighting, and the Irish-woman, not to be outdone, said:

"Shure and it is as pretty a piece of fighting as iver I see in this bar-room. Drink up, me boys, and have another wan on me."

"What do you do for a living?" asked the Captain, steadying his jaw with his hand so that he could enunciate.

"I'm a sailor, looking for a ship."

"I'll give you a job. Two dollars a day with board."

"All right, I'm your man. But what's the work to be?"

"Sailing with me up the Sacramento River. As I said, I'm the Captain of a little schooner, or a bay scow, as they call them here. I sail up the river, and carry cargo back to the city. Now we'll take another drink and go on board."

We went out, and down to the Mission wharf, where the Captain had a small boat moored to the slip. We got into her, and I rowed off under his direction, out into the bay, where anchor lights and side lights were as thick as stars in the

heavens above. They seemed to be welcoming me home.

I rowed past screeching tugs and warning ferry-boats and square-rigged ships with raking masts that loomed out of the darkness like gigantic creatures of the deep come out to breathe of the night air.

"That's her over there, pull to your right a little."

I saw the outline of a small two topmast schooner riding gracefully in the ripples of an ebb-tide. We boarded her, and tied the dinkey astern. The Captain invited me into the cabin to have a bite to eat before we set sail. The cabin was small, and reminded me of the Swede's sloop in Glasgow. It was clean, and there was a place for everything. The old man had a decided sense of order.

The small stove that was lashed to the bulk-head smoked while he was lighting the fire. While he was cooking the supper I went up on deck to look around my new ship. She was about seventy tons, round bottom and center-board. The lower masts and topmasts had been scraped and a coat of oil rubbed into them.

Their pine brightness gave them a lofty appearance against the starry horizon. The main boom looked large for so small a craft. It projected about fifteen feet over the stern. The sails were furled in gaskets, and neatly stowed between the gaffs and the booms, the decks were clean, and all ropes coiled neatly in sailor-fashion.

"Come on," roared the Captain, with difficulty through his aching jaw, "have something to eat. It's ready now."

We munched in silence, I guarding my cut lip from the hot Wienerwurst, the Captain nibbling at his delicacies with a groan. We washed the food down with hot coffee, that seemed to me delicious in spite of its leathery taste, and when the dishes had been put away went out on deck to set the mainsail, heave up the anchor, and give her the jib and foresail. So we were off with the night breeze, for Clarksburg on the Sacramento River, for a cargo of baled hay.

The Captain was a thorough sailor and knew every move of his little craft. He pointed out channel lights with one hand while he steered with the other. I could hardly see them, for my eyes were very sore and swollen. I wondered

how the crook was feeling by that time, and whether I should ever see him again.

There were stretches in the river where the wind would be fair, and again we would round a bend where it was dead ahead. Here he would haul the little schooner sharp onto the wind and beat to where the breeze was fair again. In this way we made Clarksburg in two days against the current, and sailed right up to the bank, dropping the sails and making her fast to the cottonwood trees, for there was no wharf to tie her to.

The baled hay we were going to load was piled high upon the river bank, and loading it was hard work for me, since strength was what I used instead of the handy jerk and heave that old hands acquire. So that, with working in the hot sun all day, fighting mosquitoes at night, and drinking muddy river water, I was pretty well used up by the time we were loaded. The Captain seemed to thrive. He knew the trick of loading, and old as he was he could work rings around me.

In three days we had filled the hold and stowed most of the deck cargo, which was the greater part of the whole. To-morrow we should start

for San Francisco, and that evening the Captain asked me to finish loading while he went for a walk.

About nine o'clock he came back, roaring drunk. He carried a jug which he handed to me.

"Drink some of that, young fellow," he said, with great pride.

"What is it?" I asked.

"It don't make a damned bit of difference what it is. Drink it any way. I'll tell you this much," he growled, as he fell over the cabin stool, "it's the world's greatest cure for chills 'n' fever."

What chills and fever were I did not know then (although I was to find out soon enough), nor what the "world's greatest remedy" might be. So I said: "Captain, I'll not touch it till you tell me what it is."

He tumbled into his bunk with a groan. Then he tried to get out of the bunk and couldn't. He murmured softly as his head fell back upon the dirty pillow: "Jackass brandy."

Jackass brandy again! The Devil in our midst! None of that for me! I put the jug

away, and taking a blanket and a piece of mosquito netting went up on deck to sleep.

At four o'clock in the morning the Captain came up with a tin dipper to take a drink out of the river. Seeing me asleep between the tiller ropes he shouted: "What did you do with that jug?"

In vain I urged him not to drink any more. He would have it, so I finally told him where it was, and he went down to the cabin after it.

I rolled out of the blanket, took off my clothes, jumped overboard, and had a refreshing swim. Better than that other time when I had the jackass's kick to thank for an icy plunge!

When I came aboard again, the Captain, apparently perfectly sober, was elevating the deck-platform in line with the load of hay, in order to see where to steer. He told me to make the coffee while he reefed the fore and mainsail, which was necessary with so high a deckload.

The Captain drank my coffee, but refused to eat anything, saying that his stomach was out of order, which was not, I thought, to be wondered at. At nine o'clock that morning we let go from the cottonwoods, set the sails, and drifted away with the current.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FATES GRIND THE CAPTAIN, AND SMILE AND MOCK AT ME

THE wind was light until we got down to where the river grew wider. There the breeze and current favored us. The Captain refused to let me steer, thinking that I knew very little about that kind of sailorizing; and I, seeing that the jug of brandy was beside him on the platform, knew that it was I who had reason to be alarmed, with the whole day before us, and him drinking from nine o'clock in the morning.

So the whole day passed, silently, with him ever standing at the wheel wavering about the jug that went to his lips so often; with me sometimes pleading with his unresponsiveness, sometimes standing alone cursing the kind of man he was, and biting back the fears that came crowding to my mind. But his power to steer seemed independent of his condition, which amazed me.

Since then I have lived to see many men like that—surely a token of immortality.

At about eleven o'clock that night the breeze was strong, and as we rounded the curve in the river where the wind changed the booms flew over on the other tack with a lightning bang. I would shout to him to duck his head, which he did automatically. If the main boom should catch him—well I should hate to think! What would become of the schooner, and how should I explain?

"All right, young fellow," he would stutter, as he dodged a boom. "I'm a'ri' fashtes' trip ever made. So-o-ome fash' schooner!"

Then he'd take another drink, and the schooner would lie over till the baled hay on the lee side would drag in the water.

I went down into the cabin to make coffee. I thought it might neutralize the brandy, and sober him up a bit. Before I even had the fire going in the stove I heard the booms swing over, and a deep thud in the cockpit. My heart almost stopped beating. I felt as if I were paralyzed.

There was no doubt in my mind as to what had happened. I knew that everything was waiting

for me there above: the schooner, in danger of being beached, the Captain at least badly hurt. There was no fear now, and I jumped to the deck like a man with years of wisdom behind him. I was in possession of faculties that I knew I had never had before. That is a feeling that only comes once, and it never forsakes one in emergency after that.

I ran to where I thought the Captain lay. He was there, with blood oozing from his ears and nose, stricken down at last by the mighty swing of the main boom. The boom was whistling through the rigging. The schooner wasn't away from the river bank two hundred feet.

Jumping for the wheel platform and climbing it, I clutched the wheel, putting it hard down and bringing the schooner up into the wind, heading upstream. Then, by dropping the peak of the mainsail and hauling the jib well to windward, I put her out of sailing commission. She would drift with the current down the middle of the river without danger to herself. Then I ran aft again to the Captain.

When I had carried him down into the cabin, I could see by the light of the candle that he was

still breathing. How badly he was hurt I could not see. He could not answer when I asked.

Gently I lifted him into the bunk, and in straightening out his legs I discovered that the left one was broken below the knee. His face was covered with blood, and there was a deep scalp wound at the back of his head. His eyes were partly open, the pupils turned upwards, and the lips a pale blue.

I made him as comfortable as I knew how, bandaged his head, and washed the blood away. It seemed that if he died I should be held to blame. I knew nothing of his affairs, nor even who it was who owned the schooner. What if she should be wrecked? The Captain, the vessel, and the river were all strangers to me, and I was alone with these lifeless forces.

The flapping of the main peak stirred me to action. I jumped to the deck and surveyed the vessel and the night. I could barely trace the outline of the river banks, but beyond them I knew lay uninhabited tule-lands. If there was a doctor this side of San Francisco I did not know it, nor at the moment did I seem to know much of anything at all, since my initiative of a

few minutes ago had now given place to a mind as variable as the weather-vane upon my father's barn. I actually took the time to wish that I were at home and asleep in the Irish linen sheets, to awake in the morning to find this only a dream.

The wind now increased and drops of rain fell. The fresh-water waves lapped in uncanny sound along the sides of the schooner, so differently from the wash of the great salt ocean. I turned and ran back to the cabin, to the semblance of human companionship.

This time the Captain showed signs of consciousness. His eyes were wide open, and he groaned as if in great pain. He might live, I thought, and a new hope sprang up within me. I would try to sail the schooner to 'Frisco Bay. It was a daring thing to do, but. . . .

I poured some of the muddy river water into the Captain's mouth. It gurgled down his throat, and noised as though it rippled over a shallow fall.

"How are you now, sir?"

He looked up at me, and said in a sort of a strangling whisper:

"Look out for the schooner, don't bother about me."

"Shall I take her in?"

He didn't answer, and his head waved to and fro. The candle in the bottle candlestick had burned low, the dripping wax had formed a tape-like ribbon down the side of the bottle. I blew the light out and jumped to the deck, set the main peak, ran forward and slacked over the main jib, and back again to the wheel, when she filled away and gathered speed. I put her about, and pointed her down the river.

The wind was strong now, but it favored me, and we were off, with God for a pilot, and in me the instinct of a sailor.

It seemed ages till daylight. We had no time, and the old nickel-plated watch was in the Captain's pocket. I wondered if he were dead, but could not leave the wheel to find out. Gusts of wind came at times so powerful that it was with difficulty that I kept the schooner from turning over. When this happened I had to luff so close to the river bank that there was danger of running into it.

In the loneliness and darkness I began to pray,

and I prayed that night as I have never prayed before nor since. I knew my prayers then, prayers that my mother had taught me, and which to this day I have never forgotten. I can't say that I use them much of late years, but I would if occasion demanded it. A courage and confidence seems to come to me from prayer which is not to be produced by all the will power in the world.

Wet from the rain and shivering with cold I stood at the wheel and watched the antics of the wind and the schooner, until, with the first faint streaks of dawn, I saw outlined against a hazy hill the outline of San Quentin State Prison. I knew it from the Captain's having pointed it out to me on our way up the river.

It was a beacon of hope to me. Across the bay ten or twelve miles lay Mission Flats. There was plenty of sea-room now. I was tempted to let go the wheel and take a look at the Captain, but feared that if I should find him dead I should be too much alarmed to continue on the schooner. Nor could I help him much if he were alive, so I concluded to make the best time I could to port.

About ten o'clock that Monday morning I low-

ered the sails and dropped anchor at Mission Flats, and hesitatingly entered the cabin, fearing the worst. But there was yet some life in him. He was breathing hard, with a hollow, rattling sound in his throat.

I left him, and pulled ashore in the little boat that had been towing astern all night. At the Dane's saloon in Berry Street, which occurred to me as the nearest place to go for help, I found Kitty behind the bar. I told her what had happened, and that I wanted someone who could help me get the Captain to the hospital at once. She put her hands on her fat hips, and looking out of the window said reflectively: "Shure an' I knew that something would happen to poor auld Captain Glass."

Then she spun into action. "Hans, you durty loafer, come here," she cried. "There's work for you to do."

Her husband appeared as if by magic. A short thickset man he was, coatless, and wearing green silk elastic bands with pink bows around his sleeves. He called an ambulance and a policeman, and I rowed him and the doctor to the schooner, where we found the Captain still alive.

We moved him to the boat, but he died before we had reached the wharf. Who knows but that he too, had only clung to life while his responsibility lasted? One cannot say so with fullest confidence, however, for surely he did not have the finest idea of duty as far as the jackass brandy was concerned.

The jug, by the way, I took ashore with me, and fortunately too, as I had much to explain to the police; so for the first time the jug proved to be my friend.

The agent for the schooner, to whose office I presently found my way, listened to my story without emotion or comment. When I had finished he merely nodded, and said, quite casually:

“Well, do you think you can run her?”

“Yes, sir,” and my voice broke with eagerness. “I think I can.”

“All right then, unload the hay up the bay” (I forget the name of the place he told me). “And from there go up to Porta Costa and get a load of salt.”

That was the last of Captain Glass. Unwept and unsung, he passed as many a worthier man has done, and his little bronze button went with

him into the humble grave, whose whereabouts I do not even know.

I felt proud of my new position. This was sure and good money, upwards of four hundred dollars a month; and, being not yet twenty years old, and the year one of panic and scarcity of work, I thought that it was the sea for a sailor and hogs for the landlubber.

So I went about my business, hiring a man to help me, and running the schooner without mischance for four months. Then fortune, perhaps fearing that she had spoiled me, deserted me entirely. I got malaria fever. Nothing that I could do was of any help, and with the patent medicines I bought and the whiskey and quinine, the doctor's bills I had to pay, and my despair at growing continually weaker, it began to look as if I was to leave the venture in worse condition than I was when I fought for the Captain in the saloon on Berry Street.

I left the schooner after four months, when it became apparent that I must do so to live. When I left her I had twelve hundred dollars in my pockets. After two months ashore the amount had dwindled sadly. I kept writing

home how well, and how well fixed I was, for my mother's joy at my good fortune was not to be lightly destroyed. Her letters were my only consolation in those awful weeks. Little did she know then what was to pay for being the captain of a San Francisco bay schooner!

Chills and fever usually hit me in the forenoons, and would last for about three hours on alternate days. Between times I was limp, dizzy and listless, longing to be quit of life.

CHAPTER XVIII

TOPS AND BOTTOMS—THE GAMBLER AND THE GAMBLER'S PREY

ONE afternoon as I was walking along the water-front, looking at the ships of many nations and wondering if a sea-voyage wouldn't help me, a round and red-faced man about forty, wearing a straw hat and tweed suit, walked up to me and asked me for a light for his cigar. Then he began to talk to me, and seemed kind and sympathetic. Little did I know that I was talking to one of the worst crooks in San Francisco.

He became communicative, as we stood there, and told me how his poor wife was sick up in Vancouver, turning from me as he spoke, with his handkerchief to his eyes.

"If I can only get there before she dies!" he said. "Every minute is precious, and I am a stranger here."

"I am a stranger, too," I said, "but I ought to be able to find a ship for you." I felt very sorry

for this tender-hearted man whose wife was dying hundreds of miles away. My own troubles sank into nothing compared to his.

He was grateful, and assured me that money was nothing to him. He even pulled out a roll of bills and asked me to help myself. I, of course, refused, for it was a pleasure to help him. It never occurred to me to think that the bills might be phoney.

At the Pacific Mail dock I learned that a steamer was leaving the following day for Victoria, B. C., on which he would be able to get passage. He said that he would go back later for his ticket, and, urging me at least to let him treat me to a glass of beer, skilfully guided me into the saloon of his choice.

"Now," said he, on the way, "you must let me help you to some money. I doubt if you have much."

"Oh *yes*, I have a little," I answered, bashfully.

Quick as a flash he asked me how much I had, and I, taken unawares, answered like a fool, and told him that I had two hundred and forty dollars. His eyes sparkled, and his stride lengthened. We entered the saloon.

The barroom was small. Its only occupant was the bartender, who was long and lanky, with a face that might have been chiseled out of Carrara marble, so pale and expressionless it was. He was an opium fiend, I discovered later, and well known, and sometimes protected by the police.

"What will you have?" he asked, as my seeming friend and I approached the bar.

"I will take steam-beer," I said.

"Ditto for me!" cried the crook, as he flung a gold eagle on the bar.

The beer being served, the bartender excused himself, to go and get change, he said. I offered to pay, but he said that he needed the change anyway. I didn't know that this was all a part of the piece—that the stage was set for me, and that now another character was about to make his appearance for my sole benefit.

As we drank our beer, a door opened from a back room into the bar, letting in an elderly man whose hair and beard were graying. He wore a long linen duster and slouch hat.

"Have a drink with us, old fellow," said my friend.

"No, sir," answered the old man, with a strong Western twang, "I buy my own drinks, and pay for 'em."

"Oh, very well, if that's the way you feel about it. I'll just shake the dice with you and see who pays for the three of us."

Enter Mr. Hophead, Bartender.

"Give us the dice," roared the old man. "How will we shake?"

"Tops and bottoms, three dice."

"Never heard of such a thing," whined the old Westerner, "but I'll try anything once, to be sociable. Now how does that game o' your'n go?"

I was bristling with interest. This was something I had not run across before, and the three crooks knew that I was about ready to nibble at the bait. I might have been saved, if that was all I did, but instead I insisted on swallowing hook, line, and pole.

My mother told us children that you can catch the small-pox only once, and should you recover, you will be forever immune. I know that I have helped many young men to steer clear of the crooks who infest our cities, because I have my-

self been through the mill of ignorance. For this reason, if for no other, I am glad that the saloons no longer exist as a legitimate meeting and operating ground for crooked men.

"The game is simple," said my genial friend, whose wife was dying in Vancouver. "Take these three dice, put them in the box, rattle and roll. Guess the numbers on top and bottom, add them up, and the one who guesses closest is the one who drinks free beer."

"Gosh a'mighty! I'll take a whack at ye anyway," and the old man unbuttoned the long duster. I stood by, feeling sorry for myself, that I wasn't asked to join in this wonderful game of dice.

The old fellow rattled the bones.

"Before you throw them on the bar," said my companion, with his most winsome smile, "we must both make a guess."

"All right, I'll guess twenty-seven, and, damn my old wild skin! I'll bet ye ten dollars and beer."

"You are certainly on," chimed the other, digging into his pocket for money. "My guess will be twenty-one."

The money was up, and the game was on. The hop-head bartender and I looked on wistfully as the dice rolled.

"Count the numbers," roared old Linen-Duster. "And gol-darn ye, count them right!"

My companion won, and tossing the ten dollars to me said:

"Here, take my old hayseed's money. I have more than I need."

"No, no!" I cried, "I wasn't in on your game, the money is yours." And I tossed it back again. Had I been a little more intelligent I would have noticed that the hop-headed bartender sighed and the old man retreated through the door by which he had entered in a sort of routine way. This fact passed me by at the moment, but the memory of it certainly taught me something.

The trap was now ready to spring, and I was to be my own hangman. I deserved hanging. We hang ourselves many times in our lives with the hemp rope of our selfish greed. And that day I was no exception.

My friend turned to me, and smilingly whispered: "You see how this game works, don't you?" He picked up the three dice in his fingers.

"No matter which way you count them, top and bottom, there's always twenty-one, seven on each dice."

Surely I was green and dense.

"I can't understand it yet," said I, getting terribly excited. I was afraid that old Linen-Duster might come back and spoil my chance of ever knowing. Then he explained as if he were talking to a child, that if there was a six on top, one was always on the bottom; if four, then three on the bottom—always seven, top and bottom.

The old man walked into the bar again, holding a fat-looking purse in his hand. "The loss of that money doesn't hurt me very much, stranger," he said, striding over to the bar. He opened the purse. It was full of what appeared to be twenty-dollar gold-pieces. It wasn't gold at all, I learned afterwards, but mid-winter souvenirs of San Francisco.

"I'll shake with anyone here for three hundred dollars, but don't think that if I lose it will break me."

My companion nudged me. "Here's your chance," he whispered. "Go after him. Put up

your two hundred and forty, and I'll lend you sixty more. It's easy money."

There was no chance to lose, that I could see. I put up my money, all that I had in the world, and sixty more.

"Now you shake the dice," said my opponent. "You certainly look honest to me. Rattle them, roll them, throw them on the bar."

"I'm a-guessing twenty," he continued.

"I guess twenty-one," I cried; and I wouldn't have given one dollar for all of his three hundred, so sure was I of winning. Well, I rattled and rolled the bones, being sorry for the old man all the time. Then I counted them. I counted them again. The numbers top and bottom amounted to only twenty!

I was aware of the cynical bartender looking at himself in the mirror, smiling at the sucker, who like the dreamer, pervades society from highest to lowest strata. I was aware that the old man had quietly pocketed my earnings, leaving me only a few coppers to my name. I saw the other crook deliberately slide out of a side door. I felt myself to be alone, with possibility of vengeance gone from me. Still I stood in the bare

and silent room, staring, staring at the dice on the mahogany bar, knowing at last the trick of substitution that had taken from me all I had.

The psychology of being a good loser is the feeling that the hurts of yesterday may be the cause of winning to-morrow's fight. I went out of that saloon as if I were bent on urgent business, and I was. By now it was plain enough to me that my time would be wasted in seeking redress. The matter of the moment was food, shelter, and occupation. I had not even time to think of malaria and the chills that were sure to get me soon. The past was obscure with the dawn of the morrow.

CHAPTER XIX

A SHORT CHAPTER, HEALED WOUNDS, AND A QUEER SEA-CAPTAIN

THE cream-colored November sun had only a little way to go before night swept in his wake. I walked along the waterfront and watched the ships swinging limply to the undertow. That same evening I found a ship, the barque *Ferris S. Thompson*, bound for Seattle for coal, and back again for San Francisco.

This good luck was due to a sailor, unknown to me, whom I had befriended when I was master of the bay schooner. I was unloading coal one afternoon in San Francisco. He came on board and asked me if I could give him some work to do.

"I'm sorry," said I; "I can't give you work."

He turned away, and without a murmur walked ashore. I stopped shoveling coal and gazed after him. Then I thought that it wasn't so long ago that I had been just like him—with

no money, no friends, no home, and the cruel feeling that nobody cared. I knew that I had gold in my pocket, and I wondered how long I should have it. Then I called after him: "Hello! I want to see you."

"You're broke," said I.

"Yes, and hungry into the bargain."

"Here's ten dollars for you."

He thanked me with his Norwegian accent and walked away, and I went on shoveling coal.

That was five months before, and this evening, from where he stood on the forecastle-head of the barque, he recognized me on the wharf. He was the second mate, and the barque needed one man. I got the job. I was richly paid for the small service I had rendered him.

One usually is richly paid. Kindness to others is not only a pleasure that rich and poor alike can have, but frequently it is more than its own reward. I could cite many instances.

Years later, at a time when I had plenty of money, I was walking one afternoon in Stanley Park, Vancouver. A young man was sitting on a bench looking pale and hungry, and there were lines of sadness in his face.

"What's your trouble?" I asked. "Tell me. I have noticed you sitting here for two hours. Perhaps I can help."

He cleared his throat, and a delicate smile came into his face.

"I'm broke," said he, "and hungry. I've been sleeping in the park for the last three nights, and I'm just about sick."

"How did you get in for this?"

"I put what money I had into a little mine up the country here," waving his hand toward the north. "I thought there was more to it than there was. There was nothing there."

I paid his room and board for a week, and gave him twenty dollars.

Years later I met him again. This time it was I who was down and out, and sick with rheumatism, left from the typhoid fever which had me in its grip when the Goldfield smash stripped me of a fortune.

In the little town of Manhattan, Nevada, I met him. I had been riding on a lumber wagon most of the day trying to get there. Five miles out of town the wagon broke down, and crippled as I was, I had to walk that distance. I didn't

know a soul there. Imagine my surprise when I walked into town, sick, broke, and hungry, to find the man I had helped in Stanley Park.

He recognized me at once, and my condition also.

"Now," he said, "taking me kindly by the arm, 'it's my turn to help you.'" He led me to his tent, got a doctor for me, and kept me there until I got well.

Then there was the Chinaman on the Frazer River who ran the fan-tan house at Stevestown. Grateful for my rescue of him from the three fishermen who were beating him up one night as I passed his door, he never forgot me. Later I met him in Vancouver when I was at a street corner wondering what to do next. Luck had been very bad. I saw him walking along on the other side of the street. He did not seem to see me. He walked by, crossed the street, came up by my side, walked up to me with outstretched hand. "How you do?" said he.

He gave me the usual limp oriental handshake, passed along as if he had never seen me, without waiting for a word, and left in my hand three twenty-dollar gold-pieces.

After such experiences one finds that there is indeed truth in "bread upon the waters." And one is both inspired and made reckless by this sure knowledge of the subconscious rescue work which seems invariably to save us from disaster, through some other person. The crumbs we scatter come back to us in well-baked loaves.

As to the barque *Ferris S. Thompson*, from which I have strayed so far: the voyage was a very long one for so short a distance. The reason for this delay lay with the captain. He was a State of Maine man, and old at that. I believe the only worry he had in his life at sea was due to an inborn fear of steamships. He felt that he was always in danger of being run down by one of them.

He held high regard for sailing-ship masters, but none for the captains of steamers. Even in daylight if he saw a steamer he would alter his course and steer away from the distant smoke. When night shut in there was misery for everyone on board. If he saw a masthead light, regardless of its position, he would roar:

"Tack ship, stand by headsails, weather fore and main braces. Har-r-r-d a le-e-eee!"

Around we'd go on another tack. He'd stand trembling on the poop until the steamer's light faded into the distance. Three months vanished on that voyage, although the distance round-trip was a thousand miles.

Finally, after dodging, it seemed, every steamer that plied the coast-line of the North Pacific, we reached San Francisco. What a welcome met us! When the tug-boat breasted the barque alongside the wharf, the managing owner was there.

When we were within hailing distance of the owner his voice reached out to us, and it seemed to me to have about the same effect on all on board—as though we were caught aback in a squall.

“Get off that ship, everyone of you. I don't even want you to make her fast to the wharf!” Then, his eyes wandering aft to where the old State of Maine captain stood: “Where have you been, to China? Gone three months instead of six weeks!!!” The language that followed was of that rare order known only to masters, mates and owners.

He paid us all off then and there. There were

no good wishes for our future, for to him each and all of us were equally guilty. The old captain took his medicine like the rest of us. What did he care for the abuse of an owner, compared to the sharp stem of a steamer?

But just by changing ships he couldn't get away from the steamers. Five years later I was mate on a ship bound north for Seattle, and we passed the barque *Oakland*. This same old captain commanded her—but not that day. He, with the crew, had taken to the boats twenty-four hours before. The barque, manless, was left to the mercy of wind and wave.

I pleaded with my captain to let me take her, and sail her into Puget Sound, for she was loaded with lumber, and I felt sure that I could salvage her, although she was water-logged. My captain would not hear of it, and the salvage fell to an ocean-going tug which chanced upon her, towed her to port, and received one hundred and twenty thousand dollars for her. I have often regretted that I did not defy the captain, and sail her to port or die in the attempt.

The Captain and crew were picked up off Cape Disappointment, the story being that the

barque *Oakland* was abandoned because she was so leaky. But I knew, and the captain knew that other reason—STEAMERS!

CHAPTER XX

THE HARE-LIPPED CAPTAIN—WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE AND GRUEL

I'M going to take a liberty, and bunch together seven years of sea experience from the time of my discharge from the *F. S. Thompson*, putting these memories, as it were, into a ground-swell from the deep, and letting them wash ashore, and, from amongst the kelp in the nooky inlet where the driftwood lies, gathering together the pieces that are worth salvaging, carrying them to the high-water mark, and dropping them there.

These seven years had crowded out the over-serious thoughts of youth, and developed in me the more harmonious side of the man. I could laugh at life and its drawbacks now. If I happened to be without a ship, or without money in my pocket, I felt that it was all in the day's work, and so lost nothing through worry. The smiling seas were mine to-day—lee shores belonged to yesterday.

I had a great ambition to become a master of ships, as well as a master of men; but I had to wait, first to become a citizen of the country, and then to get the necessary sea experience to qualify. Nautical astronomy and the rules of sailing I was thoroughly familiar with. Long before I became an officer aboard ship, I once with this knowledge saved a ship from going on the rocks. I was still a sailor in the forecastle.

I was in a Puget Sound port, and money was getting low with me when I met the hare-lipped captain. He was loading lumber for San Francisco. He held a half-interest in a three topmast schooner, the other half being held by a Dutchman in San Francisco who ran a coffee-royal house for the benefit of sailors who liked to mix brandy with the Dutchman's black coffee.

When I met the Captain he was coming out of a saloon on his way to the schooner. He was making short tacks on the sidewalk, and had great difficulty in shaping a straight course for the wharf.

"Do you need any sailors?" I asked him.

"I do," he said, with a hiccough; "but if I

stop now to tell you what I want, I'll fall down. Come on, take me by the arm, and steer me to the schooner."

The job was not an easy one. He was heavy, and not easy to keep on an even keel. But I got him on board, and in his cabin he invited me to remain for supper. It was unusual for a sailor to eat with the master of a ship, but I allowed for his condition, for when a man is drunk he will take up with anyone who will listen to his boasting.

The ship's cook, who had one eye and a drooping mustache, brought in the supper, which he spread noisily, and with a nervous glance at me bounded forward to the galley. I learned afterward that even the mates were afraid to face the captain that night.

It seemed to me, as I sat opposite to him, that if things didn't go right he would be a hard man to handle. But he treated me very well, and told me to come down in the morning, and he would ship me as a sailor.

Now it seemed to me, who had so often been a victim of leaky ships, that I asked a justifiable question :

"How is this ship for leaking, Captain?" But it proved to be my undoing.

"What did you say?" he inquired fiercely. "Just say that again. Just say that again, if you dare. My ship leaky!" And without hesitation, with a single gesture, he picked up and flung at me a large platter of fried steak, just missing my face. His language was startling even to me, and before I could move he was up and peeling off his coat.

Discretion seemed the thing just then, and I made a leap for the deck, where the two mates stood snickering at me as I shot by them to the wharf. I did manage to call to the mate, "I'll be with you in the morning, sir," before I ducked behind a lumber pile. None too soon, for the Captain's head showed above the companion-way. He told the poor mates what he thought of them, and treated them to the language intended for me.

Bright and early next morning I was aboard the hare-lipped Captain's ship. He didn't remember having hired me, but hired me over again, and I helped load ship for the four days we were in port. The Captain was drunk all

the time, and was very disagreeable, especially to the mate. The result was that the mate left, and we sailed without any first officer.

There were six men in the fo'c'sle, big, raw-boned, Scandinavian sailors, and the second mate was apparently a good sailor, but not a navigator. Plying in coastwise trade he did not require a second mate's license. Two days out at sea, the Captain, who did all his drinking ashore, and did not carry rum with him, became delirious for the want of it. He was having domestic trouble with one of his lady-loves. I thought whoever she was she could not be as bad as he, and Heaven help her!

The sailors were uneasy and scented disaster. When the topsails blew away, they held a consultation, and decided that the Captain must be locked up if we were ever to reach port. But the question was, who amongst us had the nerve to seize him and tie him up.

The cook was called into conference. The others thought that he, being in close touch with the raving Captain, could coax him into his cabin and quickly lock the door. I'll never forget the

expression on the cook's face when this proposition was made to him.

As I said before, he had one eye. The loss of this member had a tendency to protrude the good one, which seemed to bulge out on his cheek. He had a three-day growth of sandy beard. The drooping mustache, which was about three shades darker, covered his mouth, and when he spoke, it was self-consciously, with one dough-spattered finger to his mouth. But there was nothing hesitating about his words. He could not, and would not, lock up the Captain.

It was six o'clock in the afternoon of the third day at sea. The wind was coming stronger, and the spanker should be reefed. The topsails, what was left of them, were flying in long strips at the masthead. The Captain was sitting on a mooring bitt, alongside the man at the wheel, counting and counting something on his fingers. Often he would spring to his feet, clawing at some imaginary bug crawling on his coat-collar. No one dared to speak to him, least of all the second mate. He was doubly scared—of the Captain, and of what was going to happen to the ship; for he knew enough to dread many

things, and not enough to save the ship from one of them.

Suddenly, and quietly, the Captain sprang for the helmsman, and started to beat him up. He was a stout man, but the attack was too sudden, and he had no show at all. He began to cry murder.

Two Swedish sailors and I went on the run for the poop-deck. We didn't get there a moment too soon. We pulled the Captain away from the poor helmsman, just in time to prevent him throwing him overboard. Then he turned on me with unabated fury. But the three of us soon mastered him, and buckled him down the companionway and into his room, where we locked him in, after first removing anything that might injure him. He was raving and prancing like a wild animal.

On deck I asked the second mate if he knew his position of ship, or where he was on the ocean. He didn't know any more about it than did the sailors in the forecastle.

We called a council again, and I told the crew that while I held no license I felt sure that I could make San Francisco, since I

could navigate the ship. They agreed that I should command her, and I took the Captain's sextant. The following day I got our position, and headed her for the Golden Gate.

For two days the Captain howled and raged. He was so vicious that we dared not go into his room, but fortunately his anger was misdirected, and he did not try to escape. The cook fed him through the port-hole, with a long-handled dipper full of gruel, strongly flavored with Lea and Perrin's sauce. When I asked why he did this, he laughed at my ignorance of the sobering-up properties of this sauce. I discovered later that longshoremen and mule-skinners have also discovered this valuable secret.

After the second day the Captain grew better and slept more. On the sixth day we sailed into San Francisco Bay, and I was just about to come to anchor, when he demanded to be released, and to be allowed on the deck of his own schooner. I refused his demand, thinking that he was weak, and should have a doctor. Without more argument he withdrew his head from the porthole, threw his strength against the door, smashed it

to splinters, and came up on deck as if nothing had happened.

He surveyed the harbor with a sweep of his eye, and inquired with a flame of oaths what I was doing with his ship.

"I'm going to anchor her," I said, frightened.

"Never mind the anchor, I'm going to take her alongside the wharf. Lower the jibs down and drop the spanker."

I was about to protest, thinking that if he tried to sail alongside the wharf he would tear the sides out of her. But discipline held me in its iron grip, and I wondered if really he could possibly do it. He did. He sailed up to Mission Flats, and abreast the Fourth Street bridge. He pointed the schooner in towards the wharf as if she were alone on the water.

There were tug-boats, ferry-boats, bay-scows, and sailing-craft of all kinds and descriptions tooting and shouting and screaming for the right-of-way. Our Captain if he saw them did not notice them, but took his wheel, and with his eye on the wharf sailed in. It so happened that there was a vacant berth at the end of the pier, ahead of which lay a number of Greek fishing-

boats. They saw us coming, and got out of the way like a flock of sheep, for it looked as if there would be a nasty crash.

"Drop the peak of the fore and mainsail, and let the jib go by the run!" shouted the Captain. When this was done the wind fluttered out of our sails, and the schooner crept lazily in, gliding alongside, harmlessly squashing the barnacles on the piles, to the amazement of the crew, and the crowd gathered on the dock.

"Make her fast, and lower the fore and mainsail. Then get ashore and get your money," ordered the Captain; and that was his acknowledgement to us for our help and our silence.

But in the Dutchman's coffee house where we were paid off, we were all friends together, and there the Captain was once more able to get drunk, as drunk could be. When I left them the Captain was surrounded by his loving crew, who chanted his praises in cognac whispers, while the cook reclined against the hare-lipped one, with one arm entwined about his neck.

CHAPTER XXI

SALMON FISHING, CITIZEN AND MATE

IT was now a little over four years that I had been away from home. I was twenty-two years old. In less than a year I should be a citizen of the United States of America, and with that would come promotion from the forecastle.

My letters came regularly from Ireland, always with my mother's thoughtfulness for her son. There were many questions to answer. Did I keep my feet dry, and did I wear red flannels to keep the rheumatism away? Always her letters contained the assurance that her prayers were being said for me, and through them she felt sure that no harm could befall me. Somehow I began to feel so, too; so many adventures did I have, and narrow escapes. I cannot but believe that some good force works to preserve those of us who are innocent, or not too bad, though what that force is I cannot pretend to say.

One instance more of this I may mention here. Some months after I took the hare-lipped Captain's schooner to port, I found myself on the Fraser River, British Columbia. It was summer, the salmon season was on, I got a boat and a net from a cannery, and went gill-netting for salmon.

A young married man, who had a wife and child living in New Westminster, was my boat-puller. He was a sober, steady, hard-working man. It was towards the close of the salmon run, and we were thinking of giving up fishing, that is, it would hardly pay for the physical wear and tear with so few salmon in the river. But he prevailed on me to fish for another week, and I consented.

That Sunday afternoon before we put out to fish, I took a nap, and when I awoke I was somewhat troubled by a dream I had had. I dreamed that I saw my dead self being lowered into a grave, and I was amused at the mourners, as I stood there by the grave, watching them cover my dead self up. They didn't use earth to cover the coffin. Each one had a pail, and in the pail was water, and this they dumped into the

open grave. When it was full to the top, the water-carriers disappeared.

I told this to my boatman. He enjoyed the story, and we had a good laugh, especially at the water part of it.

“Come on,” said he then, “let us go down and get the net off the rock and into the boat. When that is done it will be time to go out to fish.”

The law in British Columbia is that there shall be no nets in the water from sunrise Saturday until sunset Sunday evening. When we were ready, we put up the sail and sailed out into the Gulf. When the sun went down I cast the net, intending as usual to drift all night, pick it up in the morning light, and sail home with the salmon to market.

This night it was different. With the after-glow of the sun came black clouds, and the night set in like a monstrous shadow, shutting out all but the aureorean gleam from the lighthouse. Unushered, the wind came in stormy gusts, and lashed the sea to rage. That was the end for seventy-two fishermen that night. Thirty-six seaworthy boats went down before its hungry onslaught like cockle-shells.

I gathered the net aboard, hoping to make Stevestown at the mouth of the Fraser River before the worst of the storm overtook me. Even before I got the net in it was hard to keep the boat from turning over. She was a large fishing-boat, twenty-four feet overall, with a six-foot beam, a round bottom, and bowed at both ends. Yet that night she had all the motion of a canoe adrift in a waterfall.

I put the mast up, and tied two reefs in the sail. I caught a glimmer from the lighthouse, and shaped a course for the river. There were dangers I knew, in crossing the bars, shallow with the sea running wild. Should I strike one I knew that nothing could save me.

My dream of the afternoon appeared to me vividly, and I crowded it away, for it was my intention to fight the wind and wave for the injustice of their sudden attack. I ground my teeth and grabbed the tiller, eased the sheet, and we were away to safety or death.

I called to my boat-puller to get forward to the bow, and keep a sharp lookout to avoid running into another fisherman. The wind and

waves fairly lifted the boat out of the water, we made such speed. One could scarcely see a finger before one's eyes. The danger of allowing the boat to broach to the sea was as great as striking a sandbar, and between the two dangers, and with my dream pushing into my mind, I sailed on.

Half an hour later there were screams, dying screams, screams from drowning men: the call to Buddha from the sinking Japanese; the wail for the Happy Hunting-Ground from the Indian, and the shouted word from the white man to his Christian God—these louder than the elements of the night.

To sail on amidst capsized fishing-boats was playing quoits with fate. Realizing this new danger, I called out to my boat-puller to look out for himself. I determined to come up into the wind and sea. If I could, my best chance lay in the open sea. If not—well there would be one more fishing-boat lost.

I hauled in the sheet, and put the tiller over. Like a race-horse she rounded into the waves, swamped herself full to the gunwales, but did

not, as I expected, turn bottom up. I called to the boat-puller: "Throw the anchor overboard." I got no response.

Fearing the worst, that he had been pitched into the sea, I repeated the order. Then I realized that I was alone, and my heart began to pound. I realized that I, too, was doomed. But the time had not come yet to pray. If I could manage to get forward and get the anchor out she'd swing head on to the storm. This would help to prolong the end, for we carried a sea-anchor with seventy-five feet of rope.

The water in the boat was nigh up to my waist. I wallowed through it, and got out the anchor. Then I heaved the net overboard, and bailed the water out, and she swung bow on to the waves with the strain on the anchor rope. I bailed, and the storm roared, unceasingly, until day-break.

With the morning sun came calmer waves. The wind took flight to some distant sea, and I gave thanks for another day. Could it be mother's prayers that saved a son, or just a freak of fate? The bloated bodies of seventy-two fishermen beached on the sands. I hunted for

my puller and found him, took the body to the wife who loved him, and to the child who chattered and smiled and wondered why Daddy slept so long. I had made some money fishing that I need not use, and the widow thanked me.

A few months later I got my citizenship papers. I had been in the United States five years, from 1894 to 1899, when I graduated forever from the fo'c'sle, with the receipt of my naturalization papers. I took an examination and passed for mate.

My first ship as an officer was bound for Australia. I knew all the tricks of sailors, their hatreds, their sympathies, their childish joys and youthful egotisms. The old saying holds good in every instance: "You've got to camp with a man to know him."

It is a common saying at sea, especially among the officers and masters who graduated from apprentice seamen to their commands, that few men who start in the forecastle ever reach the bridge. But I am convinced that those of the men who work their way up know how to handle men to get the best work out of them, if they have the mind to.

Kindness and appreciation is what they require. You've got to know them and be one of them, listen to their petty grievances, praise them even when they make mistakes. Then there is nothing they won't do for you.

And I have found out that this rule works as well on land as on the sea. The man who is not in close touch with his employees is usually in trouble with them. Often the master prefers to remain aloof from his men, issuing his orders through some prejudiced superintendent or foreman, and trusting to welfare-work to stand for good-will. If he did not do this, there would be fewer unions in the world to-day.

During the World War I was a superintendent at the Submarine Boat Corporation's yard—the second largest shipyard in the United States. We had as many as twenty-five thousand men working there. It was astonishing the number of men who were fired every day, it seemed to me for no other reason than that their foreman did not understand or want to know them; and the men they got in return were worse than those they had sent away. For more than a year as Superintendent of Ship Rigging and Outfitting

I had no occasion to fire a man, and all that time my department was above standard in efficiency. To choose a man you have got to know him, and he should be treated like a man, once you put him to work.

The voyage to Australia was a pleasant one, although it seemed disappointing to the Captain. He shipped me as mate more on my physical appearance, than for any other reason, for he wanted a man who could fight. I understood from the ship's carpenter, who had sailed many voyages with him, that there was usually trouble on board his ship. That voyage there was no fighting and very little growling, and yet the men were the average types that are picked up in any seaport.

"Don't get too friendly with them," the Captain told me. "I know them. One of these days they will be kicking you into the lee scuppers. That's the way they repay kindness."

"We'll see," said I, and dismissed the subject. I was young, but I knew the sailor's temperament, and when I spoke to them it was to call them by their names, and not by some manufactured names with an oath.

The crew was musical. There were a baritone, trombonist, and cornettist in the forecabin. One of them made a triangle out of a chain hook, and the orchestra was complete. During the dog-watches in the tropics, and on Sundays, we played new pieces. At times I would spell the cornet-player off, and play with them.

It was all a bit hard on the Captain, who had no ear for music, and so made no allowance for varied harmonies. When the notes reached him on the poop deck he'd pull at his pipe and pull his beard, and pace the deck on the double-quick. One evening while we were sailing south of the Samoas, we ran into a head wind. It seemed unusual. The Southeast Trades should have held for at least another five degrees farther South.

We were playing that evening when the wind hauled ahead, and pushed the ship off her course. The Captain came running from the poop forward. "Now see what you've done," he roared. "Cut that music out, and cut it out for good. I knew something would happen with that clabbering going on."

He said a whole lot more, words that were

jerky and explosive. He blamed the forecastle orchestra for the head wind, and the instruments had to be put away. The sailor who beat time on the chain-hook triangle hung it up over his bunk for his socks to dry on. That settled music for that voyage. They wouldn't even sing a capstan chantey when they were heaving up the anchor. It took nine months to make the voyage, and at the end I left the ship and so did the crew. It would have been cheaper in the end to have kept us contented with a little innocent music.

CHAPTER XXII

CHAPTER ONE ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CAPTAINS

CAPTAINS of sailing-ships have time to be superstitious, and sometimes they are more so than sailors before the mast. While they are supposed to have a higher degree of intelligence, they come in contact with more traditions of the sea, and it seems are very susceptible to them.

Once I was mate with a Swede captain who believed that to see whales was a bad omen; he claimed that gales of wind would follow, and I have to admit that when I was with him this was more or less true.

Another, a Dane, believed that when he dreamed of white horses we were sure to have a blow, and as he seemed always to be dreaming of them and predicting disaster in the mildest of weather, I did not stay long with him. There was no barometer on board, nor would he allow any, for some reason known best to himself.

I made two voyages with another old twisted warp of a man, before we finally lost the ship. He was afraid of his shadow. He would never allow another shadow to cross it. To avoid this gave him some nifty footwork to do, especially around noon when we would be taking the sun together, and I out of devilment would throw my shadow across his.

"See what you are doing now," he would roar, "what can you expect with this kind of work going on?"

I'd excuse myself, and separate the shadows, but he would be deeply depressed for a long time.

He had queer ideas about booms and ladders, being afraid to pass under them, and so kept continually dodging; and when the sea was afire with phosphorescent glow, and the spray would lift up tiny diamond-blue bulbs to the deck, he'd murmur: "Yes, by Heavens, there's something back of this!"

The ship he commanded was old, and, by reason of its lack of buoyancy, only fit to carry lumber, which can stand more water than any other cargo. We were loading at Garden City, Oregon, and had just shipped a new crew, when

the men discovered they were aboard a leaky ship.

They beat it; the next crew also; and before we had the ship loaded we had had six crews. The last, you might say, was shanghaied. These men came from Portland, Oregon, and were lime-juice sailors. The moment they put their bags on board the tugboat pulled us out to anchor. There we could hold them until we were ready for sea.

When the anchor was down I called on them to pump her out, saying to encourage them: "She hasn't been pumped out for several days, and you may find a little water in her."

This wasn't true, for while we were at the wharf I had kept two longshoremen busy pumping at her most of the time, and it was hard even to get them to do it, so bad was her reputation.

There was a tall slim Irishman in the crew, who became at once spokesman for the others.

"Ah," said he, with a smile, "and shure, it won't take *us* no time at all, at all, to pump her out for ye."

I smiled too, a different smile, and looked out at the bar that we were soon to cross on our way

to the open sea. The lime-juice crew pumped for an hour with never a suck from the pump. I could hear them growling and swearing. Presently the Irishman stuck his head above the deck-load and shouted to me :

“Bejasus and has the bottom dropped out of her? Is it a ship we’re on, at all, at all, or is it just a raft of lumber? The divil himself wouldn’t go to sea on her!”

It wasn’t so much what the Irishman said that made me roar with laughter, it was the expression on his face—that of an abandoned castaway; and I nearly lost all my new-made dignity of coastwise mate then and there.

Struggling for seriousness, I told him I thought that the little water that washed in the bilges was a small matter, and that a few strokes more of the pump would settle it. He crawled down to the pump again, but not before he had said a few words :

“It’s perpitoool motion ye’d ought to have on the pumps. As God is me judge, I balave ye could see the fish in the ocean through th’ bottom av her!”

They were still pumping when the superstiti-

ous captain came aboard. His expression was a good deal like the Irishman's, clabby and dearing.

"Did you hear the news before you left the wharf?" he murmured nervously.

"Hear what?" I asked.

He put his hand to his mouth. "Hush, listen; the rats left the ship this morning between four and five o'clock."

"Did you see them leave?" I asked, trying hard to suppress a giggle.

"I didn't, but there were others that saw them. Swarming off in droves they were. . . ."

"Oi'll tell yez," came a furious voice as the Irishman's head appeared again, "Oi'll tell yez again and once for all, there isn't any bottom in the bloody auld hooker. It's murrder ye'd be doing to have daycint min sign articles on a rotten auld hulk widout ribs or annything to hauld her together!"

The Captain wet his lips with his long red tongue. He looked at me sort of puzzled, then his eyes shifted to the Irishman, and he sighed heavily, and self-consciously. For a moment there was a lull in the conversation—even the

pumps stopped. The breakers that broke on the sprits of the bar had an echo-gnawing sound, noticeable in that moment of intense rat-superstition. Then the Irishman spoke again, solemnly:

"There isn't wan of us will sail wit yez. We're sailors, ivery wan av us, but behivins we're not web-footed. Did yez hear that now? And the divil foot will we put on your ship!"

The ultimatum seemed to be as terrible to the captain as if it had been possible for the crew to do otherwise than sail, seeing that they were already on the way.

"Is she leaking any worse?" he asked.

"I think she is," I answered cruelly, at the same time turning my back on the Irishman, for it would never do to let him hear about the rats.

"I know where it is," and the captain looked wildly about him. "It's that damned stern-post again. I've been calking it off and on for the last ten years."

He removed his hat and rubbed his bald head. He seemed to be thinking deeply. There was reason to think. Undoubtedly the rats knew about that old leak in the stern-post. Why then

should they desert their old nests after all these years? It was an old leak with a new aspect

The lime-juice crew had stopped pumping, and stood around the mainmast talking, their voices having a raspy twang.

Toot, toot, toot! came the tugboat, none too soon.

At once the Captain put ship's dignity into a bad situation.

"I'll put her on the dry-dock next trip," he promised, "but we'll have to get to sea with her now. I'll talk to the crew."

He walked forward bravely, for he didn't want to go to sea any more than the crew did, but for him it was a choice between the risk and giving up his command, not to mention undergoing the jibes of other captains, his drinking-mates ashore. With the crew it was simply risk, and it is always a pity to take discontented men forcibly to sea.

He talked to them kindly, singing the praises of his ship, and their argument was fortunately cut short by the tug-boat captain, who unfeelingly demanded why he should be forced to wait all day on a bunch of good-for-nothing loafers.

So we heaved up the anchor, taking the tow-

line aboard, and soon the tug-boat let go of us. We put sail on her and headed for the open sea.

CHAPTER XXIII

MORE PSYCHOLOGY AND SOME ACTION

WE were bound for Redondo, southern California. It was the month of January, and cold and snappy. Having possession of the sounding-rod, I was in a position to encourage the crew, though they received my well-meant promptings with sarcasm and scorn. They pumped, I pumped, the Captain pumped, and even the cook, in intervals of cooking; we pumped, and pumped, and pumped. We did manage to keep her down to about three feet of water in the hold.

Finally there came a night when the storm-bound sun, set with yellow streamers, crammed into the ocean, and by the time the sidelights were lighted and fastened into the screens, the wind had a vicious whip to it, and the waves from out the evening shadows rushed in upon the defenseless ship like a strange army of humpy creatures.

It was interesting to one with a nautical eye to watch the maneuvers of the Captain and the Irishman.

"Reef her down!" roared the Captain, now entirely renouncing his superstitious fears for real action, as a real sailor will do every time.

"The curse of God on the day I iver rounded the Horn," shouted the Irishman. "Here we are, mind yez, in a hurricane, and in an auld ship that opens up her sames to let the ocean in. It's a good mind I have not to do a hand's turn, jist let her sink and drownd yez like rats!"

"You'll drown no rats on her this trip!" I shouted to him, for the pure mischief of it.

His raging reply was drowned out by a little stubby Swede who had also heard, and now breasted the wind and walked up to me.

"Did you say there ban no rats in her?"

"Yes," said I. "They left her this trip at Garden City."

"Oh, by Yiminy Mike," he shouted to the Irishman, "the rats ban gone!"

It was pitch dark now, and the spray from the waves threw shadows of light across the deck-load, but not enough to show the expression of

Mike's face when the Swede told him that the rats had left the ship. There is something about an Irishman in a crisis that is different from most people. When hope is gone he doesn't want to be told about it. He may feel more the danger of dying, due perhaps to training and superstition, but to say to him, "This is the end, let us make our peace with God," would surely make him fight you before the end did come.

When the Swede told Mike that the rats had gone, and the other sailors heard the news, there was a human nucleus of silence in the rising storm, while each took stock of himself after his fashion. The situation was really serious enough without the added dread caused by the deserting rats.

No one felt the solemnity of it all more than Mike. But when the Swede spoke up: "Well, by Yiminy, this is the last of us," Mike flew at him.

"Ah to Hell wit yez, shure it's wailin' like a Banshee ye are. What does an auld rat amount to annyway? Shure they left the auld hooker because they were all shtarved to death, that's what they did, and who would blame thim?

Let's reef her down, me byes, she's a foine little ship, so she is."

We reefed her down, and hove her to, and all the time Mike sang songs of love and songs of hate, but never a song of fear.

The Captain, feeling temporary relief from anxiety, returned to his superstition and asked Mike to stop singing, thinking that his high notes caused the apexes of wind, which certainly did accompany them.

"It's bad enough as it is," whined the squirming Captain, "without tantalizing the elements."

The wind, like the night, came stronger. The ship rolled, groaned, and flung herself carelessly at the humpy ocean. When an extra daring sea would leap to the high deckload and find its level on the heads of the pumpers, the Swede would cry out, "Another like that ban the last of us," and Mike would roar:

"Keep yer clapper closed. Shure it'll be the likes of you that'll be drivin' me from the say, and not the storms at all, at all."

The night was gloomy, and to look at the Captain made it gloomier still. He kept running from the barometer to the pump exclaiming:

"Didn't I know that it would come to this?" When he'd look at the compass, the binnacle light shining in his face would show wrinkles of pain there, made by the agonies of the ship. Morning came, and the topaz sky cast an angry glare on the agitated sea. The wind whipped and bit at the ship, and in her leakiness she would shiver at the violence of the waves. The part of her hull that wasn't submerged would rise up to their taunts like a black-finned mammoth from the deep, writhing in torture.

Towards noon the weather grew better, we gave her more sail, and headed her away on her course. For nineteen days we pumped to keep her afloat until we made Redondo. Sleep we hardly had at all, and our aching muscles hardened, and grew to monstrous size.

The port had neither harbor nor tug-boats, and the open sea washed in against the wharves, running far out from the shore. When we came to anchor, and the ship brought strain on the cable, it snapped, and the long ground swells made a total wreck of her on the sandy beach. That was the end of her, whether the rats had anything to do with it or not.

It was a great relief to have my feet finally touch the sand. I was happy too. I had a red-headed sweetheart in that town, and I set about finding her. She was there all right, but there was no love in her eyes for a ship-wrecked sailor. Shortly after that she was married to a young customs house inspector, and I scratched another red-haired lady from my memory.

We were paid off at Redondo, and with money in our pockets we headed for Murphy's saloon and drank one another's health. The Captain and I left Mike and the Swede with their arms around each other singing, "Rolling Home Across the Sea," as we started by rail for San Francisco.

The owners were glad to see us, and happy that we didn't bring their old rotten ship into port again. If we had had to go down in her it would have been regrettable, though after all our risk; but they were just as well pleased that we should live to pump another day. But we had a different greeting from the insurance company. One would have thought that we were murderers from the gruelling they gave us. We stuck to the truth, try as they might to shake

us, and in the end the owners received a large sum of money for their worthless, unseaworthy ship.

The Captain and I, like a river with two channels, parted, never to meet on this earth again. He told me that he was tired of the sea, and intended to put his savings into a little place ashore. We shook hands; and, as we parted, I am sure that we were both thinking of rats, rotten ships, and storms.

CHAPTER XXIV

SOME FACTS ABOUT WOMEN, RED HAIRE^D AND OTHERWISE, WITH A WORD ABOUT WIVES, AND A PEACEFUL CONCLUSION IN THE PICK AND THE GOLD-PAN

AS mate my next ship was bound for the Fijis in the South Seas, and the Captain died on the voyage, and I took the ship to port and home again. I have described this voyage in my book "The Flying Bo'sun."

The critics, who plow not the oceans, received it very kindly, as I hope they will receive this narrative. So I yarn along, and think of past things, and write them down, partly as a sailor who knew all that was hard and rough, and partly as a man recently come to writing who is intoxicated with the new-found use of words to evoke old scenes.

Now "The Flying Bo'sun," though being intended to present me fairly to the world, did not

mention that I had a girl in the Fijis. Well I did. A real sweetheart. She wasn't black—they never were—nor yellow; just a sweet and wholesome girl, and as fond of me as I of her.

A sailor not in love is a discontented one, and it was seldom in this respect that I was out of harmony with the world. I hope that I can go on loving till my eyes are closed, and my toes are tied together, like my grandmother's were when she died, when I was a little boy. They tied her toes together, but the knees would not stay down. Finally, to keep them from bending up and scaring everyone, a large stone was put upon them. Somehow the knees jumped up anyway, the stone rolled off, and everyone thought that she must have seen some sight in Heaven to make her jump so.

I'm sure I'll be all the better for the beauties I see in Heaven, as I have been for those I've seen on earth, and so is every other man, regardless of the years that kink and wrinkle and round him into narrowness.

Women that I've met I've often compared with ships that I have sailed on. Some are better in a storm than others. Then there are the cranky

ones who throw up their head and balk the tide, and spill you into an ocean of trouble.

Of course, there are instances where the master is at fault. That is where you carry too much sail, and you wait too long to reef her down. Then there is a separation of something. You are either dismantled and left with but a memory of your once-beautiful ship, or you both sink together.

There is another kind of ship that will withstand gales in an open sea, but once you point her landward you have to be careful of submerged reefs, for she's sure to find them.

There are a few ships, not too few, that sailors love, whose compass course will steer them through iceberg-gaps and narrow straits, and on to Isles of Splendor.

My South Sea sweetheart lived in Suva, the capital of the Fijis. Our fondness for each other ripened into more than friendship. Although my stay there was short, my impressions of her still linger, like memories of hawthorn blossoms when the dew lifts and fuses away in the morning sun. It was two years after that that I sailed there again, and meantime my letters to

her were as irregular as the winds of ocean. When I arrived I learned that she was married and living in Australia.

The Fijis held little to interest me after that. I was disheartened and discouraged with everything. But the Sea, my first love, took me back, and in her lanes I found the tonic to cure aches and longings, and make me a lover again, almost before the isles of shadowed pines had faded into a blur of azure light.

Six months had passed, and I was in a home port again. I became engaged to a girl in the State of Washington. I was twenty-seven years old then, and a Captain sailing on coastwise ships. We were married, and I gave up the sea for a while. This marriage proved to be the ship that balks the tide. For six years we held true to our course, then a squall from the desert, for we were living there, arose from the cactus and sage-brush and blew us apart, but left its memories of the wreck.

Five years later I met and married another. She lived in the jungles of Idaho. She was slick and trim, and had memory's likeness to my South Sea girl. Like the ship that handles well in the

open sea, she made for the land without compass and struck a reef. That was a total wreck of memories, and a short voyage—two months in all. We parted, I going to the sea—wailing over me now, in despair of me—and she to a man who had many sheep and many fleeces to his credit.

I was married again, but that's another story and needs atmosphere, so I'll paddle past it and survey the shores below; and some quiet evening when the muskrat's splash spreads a splatter of spray, I'll buck the stream and paddle back, and spin the yarn.

When I first left the sea I went to mining in Goldfield, Nevada. That was in 1903. There was a boom on then, and a few of the mines held high-grade ore. There were about ten thousand people in the camp. Being fresh from the sea, and knowing nothing about mines or mining, I thought that the people I met there were about as crazy as anything I had ever seen.

The camp was wide open. There was nothing barred—everything went. Justifiable homicide was the verdict for those who were quick on the trigger, and it behooved the tenderfoot to get acclimated with the utmost speed to those who

sniffed the alkali. There was no room for friendliness in that great selfish clamor. Everyone was for himself.

The mountains that had hitherto guarded their secrets from the lust of men were now gouged and cut, and in some places showed their treasure. Burros and pack mules climbed the steep trails, their old and new masters pushing, and cursing, and clubbing them along. Like hungry locusts, these men of no particular nationality, and little love of home, swept the hills as if to raven on the bushes and the dust.

I, like the drift from a wreck, was swept away by a comber of greed, to join the rest in the conquest of canyon and peak. I bought burros, bacon, beans, and flour, picks and shovels and drilling-steel. I rambled the hills and gophered holes. I staked claims and located town and water sites. I thought of myself as big in a financial way. I talked in millions, as did everyone else there.

But that's the joke the desert plays on the victim who wrestles with her mysteries. I had thought that I owned gold and silver mines, copper, cinnabar, and turquoise. They had surface

symptoms to lead one on to dig, and dig, and toil and sweat, and spend the last cent to reach the utmost peak of stained illusion. So I mined in Nevada till the last dollar was gone, and I was left with a broken home and lawsuits, typhoid and rheumatism.

There is another side to the mountain ranges and desert sands, but the lust for gold must disappear before one sees the beauty of nature. The men who spend their lives there are as interesting as the little brown brook that bubbles down the mountain-side.

"Desert rats" they are called; and they and their old shaggy burros who nibble the green tops of the sage-brush are as much a part of the landscape as the silent cactus-sentinel of the desert which is supposed to shelter the souls of pioneers dead and gone; the "Joshua."

CHAPTER XXV

THE STORY OF THE RETURN OF LIDA AND OF TWO STRANGE MEN

LIDA had been an old silver camp, and in the early sixties it was a booming town. This much was told me by an old squaw man who lived there. He was one of those early miners who stayed on in a town after the mines played out, in the hope that some day it would awake once more to the click of a pistol and the bray of the burro.

He was an Austrian by birth, and his name ended in "vitch." I could never pronounce it. A squaw lived with him who showed the years more than he. The desert wrinkles, like kinks in a juniper, were furrowed in her face. He treated her much as one would an outlaw cayuse, kicking and beating her when he felt like it; and in course of time when prosperity made him independent of the little comfort she gave him, it was said that he doped a bottle of whiskey for her.

Certain it was that she died suddenly, with all the symptoms of poisoning, and that he buried her alongside the pump in the back yard with as little consideration as one would show a mongrel dog. There was no law there to punish him, and the squaw was covered up and soon forgotten. He had, in spite of this, a kind of pathetic way with him, and when he told a story to the miners about his poor old mother in Austria they fell for it, and bought drinks from him.

But I am straying ahead of my story. When I first saw him, the squaw was alive, and she and he lived in a 'dobe house at the head of what once had been the principal street of Lida. You could not tell that then. The sage-brush grew over it, covering the wagon ruts, and up on the hill beyond was the graveyard, shrouded in underbrush, dead as dead could be. Few, if any, of the miners buried there had died natural deaths, as the scrawly hand-written grave boards bore witness.

But no decay could obliterate memories of former greatness, and it was decreed that Lida should come to life again, after forty years. A new generation of miners came and took on

where the old generation had left off. The town site was grubbed, the brush burned up, and lots were sold to newcomers. Tents went up, the squaw man started a saloon, chips rattled and pistols clicked, and Lida was herself again.

The Austrian's dream had come true. He owned the town site, and money came in fast. His only trouble was with an occasional "lot-jumper," someone who was rash enough to settle in dispute of his quit-claim title to the town lots. But this trouble was a small item, being quickly settled with a gun. He was a big man now, and dictated town policies of the tent town, and signed as many checks as he cashed.

One day, when the old town had been new about six months, a stranger drove up in an automobile. There was nothing unusual in this, but there was something unusual in the man. Big and broad and strong he looked, and his large round face showed that he had been carefully fed. The tan of the desert was missing. His eyes were black and penetrating, and he carried an atmosphere of power over men, which was confirmed by the tight lips which concealed a mouth well filled with fine teeth, and covered by

a jet black mustache. He must have been past middle age, for his hair was graying at the temples, and he had quite a swagger as he pulled off his linen duster.

"Yes," said he, without preliminary, as his compelling eye roved over a chance group of miners while he marched about limbering his legs, "Yes, boys, I am going to do things here that will astonish the natives. I'm going to put Lida on the map."

"Vot's dot?" asked the Austrian, sidling up to him with elbows squared, "Vot's dot?"

The stranger saw fit to dispose of him with a stare which had been useful on other similar occasions, and the Austrian growled and went away.

That night there was a meeting in Dutch John's saloon. The stranger took charge. He bought the miners drinks, and told them of Lida's wonderful possibilities. At first, when their vision had been unclouded, they had been inclined to think him an unscrupulous promoter and a crook. Now they fell for his golden words.

"Right at your door, gentlemen," he cried, in concluding a flowery and powerful speech,

“under your eyes, beneath these grand old peaks, is one of the richest gold camps in the world. It is no more than right that we should dedicate a city of granite blocks to those noble spires that have been true to their trust these million years, even if, as my engineers tell me, it will be necessary to abandon the present town site for one on the slope of the hill. Near here, Men of the Hills, are the graves of silent pioneers. If each of those mouldering forms could rise up and speak to you, I am sure they would say, “Move, and buy, and be not afraid, for the future is golden.”

Then he bought drinks, and shook each miner by the hand. As he searched the faces, his black eyes spoke: “I’m here to trim you, and trim you right!”

It was plain that the stranger had them going, and the squaw man told them so. He reduced the price of his lots—a quarter, a half—and he had the main street plowed and rolled. While they commented on how much better it looked, he, too, gave the miners free drinks. His corral gate was opened, and the town burros hee-hawed in, and nibbled on the baled hay. The burro

men were pleased, and slapped the squaw man on the back, assuring him of their loyalty to the old town.

At last he gave way to his emotion. With his old face warped in coyote grins he cried: "Vell, Byes, I haf von ting to do before I vos dead."

The burro men looked at each other. The squaw man waved them away as they tried to pat him on the back. He was shaking as if with a chill. The flimsy pine bar shook with him, and the glasses rattled. Again he spoke: "I do it, and I do it queek!"

He got no further, for a shadow broke the desert sunlight on the floor, and the stranger stood in the doorway.

"Give us a drink, Dutchy," he said quietly, as if the very atmosphere were not charged with hate of him, and as quietly moved up to the bar.

The squaw man reached under the bar with his old desert-bleached hand, and brought up a revolver. The burro men scattered like scud before a gale, but the stranger stood there, leaning against the bar, looking quietly into the terrible face of Dutchy.

The squaw man licked his dry lips and spoke:

"I vos going to kill you, you damned crook. You steal mine town up mit de hill."

The stranger threw his eyes full on Dutchy. Then he walked along the bar without a word, and wrenched the revolver from him; easily, deliberately, it seemed. Then he slapped him on the jaw.

"Dutchy," he said, and the miners outside the door began to come back at the words; "you may poison squaws, and shoot men in the back, but when it comes to an even break you are a coward. Now hurry and get drinks for the boys. Come on," he called, "the fight is over, and Dutchy feels better now."

We drank, and the stranger pulled out a great roll of bills, stripping them down until he came to a twenty, on which Dutchy's eyes fastened with the look of a greedy hound. The stranger bade him keep the change.

The stranger's reputation was made now. He had proved his steel to the natives of Lida. He was one of those great men of early times whose genius was real, no matter how misdirected. He was an old hand at the game of fleecing, and he knew that before you commence

to shear the sheep you must first get them corralled.

He slung his money about like a drunken sailor, and everyone, even the Piute Indians, sang his praises. We believed that there was fabulous wealth in the hills, and that his purpose was to build comfortable homes for the men of the desert; as he said, "to help put windows into the mountains," that we might see the fortunes which were to be ours for the asking.

When a man of the stranger's type visits a desert mining town it is not from choice, but to create a gap in the trail of his reputation. Unfortunately he, who could have played high finance equally well on the square, had chosen the line of least resistance in hidden places.

He had a record, which included a penitentiary term. It was said that there he had sold the warden fifteen thousand dollars worth of wildcat stock, and yet got pardoned. He had been a lawyer, and was gifted with a mind that could squeeze him out of any tight place. His scheme for the new town site in Lida was backed by a Goldfield bank that had no scruples about spending depositors' money. So the new town

site was cleared of sage-brush and Joshua, streets were laid out, and blocks plotted.

In vain the squaw man offered us inducements to stay. His cowardice and greed had killed him in face of the stranger's liberality and promises, and like the sheep again, we rolled up our tents and moved them up the hill to the new town.

By this time the stranger had six automobiles, all new, running from Goldfield and bringing in newcomers with money to buy lots. A one-plank sidewalk was laid which was only a preliminary to the granite buildings, but it inspired confidence, for lumber was one hundred and fifty dollars a thousand feet at the railroad sixty miles away. It cost three cents a pound to haul it to Lida by mule-team.

The stranger cared nothing for these minor matters of expense. The bank in Goldfield had plenty of money. The sap-headed depositors were too busy in the mountains hunting gold to bother their heads about banks or plank sidewalks.

CHAPTER XXVI

CONCERNING THE LAST OF THE NEW AND THE
OLD-NEW TOWN OF LIDA; OF DUTCHY AND
THE WOMAN AND THE STRANGER, AND
LEAVING THINGS ALMOST AS THEY
WERE IN THE SIXTIES. A
SHAKE-DOWN

DUTCHY was alone now. No inducement he could make would hold anyone, and he was left pretty much to the company of stray burros, and the dead squaw under the pump. His hair and beard grew long and weedy. The nails on his fingers resembled the talons of an eagle, his overalls and shirt-front were dirty and spattered with flour dough. He refused to visit the new town, although the stranger, knowing that he had money, used every wile to get him there, and stayed on in the old Lida, praying for a vengeance that he had himself failed to get.

The mountains chimed the echoes of pounding steel. The exploding giant powder rang through the canyons like the roar of an angry bull. Hill-sides were torn open by the hungry, gaunt, and ravenous miners. Women were there, too, with boots and picks on their shoulders, and as savage as the male brutes in their scrambling greed.

The old graveyard of the sixties was grubbed of its underbrush, and a fence stuck around it. Many fresh graves were made open to be filled by men who were clumsy with a gun. One day a woman of the underworld was to be buried there. She might have gone on living, it was said, had she had a good doctor. There was a doctor there, but he had waited until he was forty-five years old to graduate by a correspondence course. Meantime he ran a hoist.

When a man died, very little attention was paid to him. He was boxed up as a matter of course, dumped into the grave, and as quickly forgotten. But with this woman it was different.

There was a feeling of sentiment in the air. Those rough men of the hills threw down their picks and put their giant powder away, and wandered solemnly into town. She who now

lay stretched in death on a cot in the back end of a saloon and who had received little in life but whiskey, grunts and kicks from men—she was going to have a funeral. However little her joy may have been in her frock-apron days, her spirit must rejoice now at the faces sorrowing at her departure from the clay.

There was a Scotchman in the hills who in days gone by had been a Presbyterian minister. He was sent for to bury the prostitute.

There was another sorrow on the wing to Lida, far greater to the minds of most men than the death of her who had bartered her body that brutes might lust to scorn her.

The bank in Goldfield, to which the stranger had given his brains that the new town of Lida might grow, had gotten about all of the people's money that it needed. The president and the cashier had absconded, stealing everything but a five-dollar gold piece and a five-cent piece that rolled under the safe. That was all that was left of a hundred thousand dollars of deposits. The news was to strike Lida when the miners were in from the hills, drawn by the funeral to meet in a greater grief.

They were all small depositors, and their hundred dollars or so represented years of deprivation in the desert, misery, thirst, and hunger. Lida would be swept off the map as quickly as she had been put on it. Her granite buildings that were to welcome the morning rays of the desert sun, must now mirage the specter of a thief's glory—the granite ghost of yesterday.

That day the stranger did not face the music. By the time the stage-coach brought the news of disaster, he had sought trails still more hidden from the light of day. The driver of the stage-coach was the owner of lots in Lida, and a depositor in the bank in Goldfield. He whipped his horses most of the thirty miles to get the news to Lida, and the news settled on the town like the March wind that brings hail.

Men began to look queer and snuff the air, as before a battle. They were not to be trifled with that day. A double duty confronted them. They had not forgotten their reverence for the open grave, but their eyes shifted quickly away to where the sage and sky met—where might be some puff of dust to betray a fugitive bank robber.

The ex-preacher arrived late in the afternoon. He was tired, and so was the cayuse he was riding. He was a heavy man, fat from eating sour-belly and beans. His khaki trousers had been whipped clean by the brush he had squeezed through. His cheeks were flabby and hairy, his knuckles were skinned, and the loose soles on his worn-out boots flopped when he walked.

The men of Lida had been waiting for him since the stage-coach came in. That was two long hours ago—years of suspense it seemed to them. A man of the desert, whose casual eye is his companion in danger, might have noticed the queer actions of the miners that peaceful May evening.

Horses, saddled and bridled, pranced nervously and snapped at the halters that bound them to tent pegs. Then there were wild-looking bronchos hitched to buckboards, that would rear back in their harness and plunge forward, hurryingly anxious to get away to the dust of the desert.

A man who plows his own field and never roams beyond his own boundary line would have been afraid had he looked into the faces of the

miners, so grim they were, so resolute in restraint, so death-respecting, and death-dealing. All armed as they were, with notched rifles and revolvers, some with lighthearted mother-of-pearl adornment to make their work more palatable, still the expression on their faces outdid in threat the fact of their weapons.

The preacher dismounted at the saloon where the body of the dead woman lay. "Give me some beer," he demanded, and they gave him beer. "Now we'll take up the corpse," he announced, "and go to the graveyard and bury it."

It was a quarter of a mile up the hill to the grave. The woman was tenderly carried there on the shoulders of men who were quick on their feet and quick with their eye. She might have been a precious gem, such delicate care she had in being lowered into the open hole.

Hats were taken off. The preacher stood on the mound of loose dirt that was soon to cover her up. There was the serenity of peace in the poise of the miners. The hill and the canyon below were in shadow, and beyond the peaks of the Panamint were ablaze in amber coloring. What a strange picture it made! Half a thou-

sand men with heads bared and bowed over the grave of a whore. Half a thousand ruined men, waiting for revenge!

The preacher read a burial service, and spoke a simple word in defense of the faults that had been the ruin of her. Then he called on them to sing "Nearer my God to Thee," leading the hymn in a rich baritone. One by one those soul-hardened men joined in, and as they sang their faces relaxed and the anguish-wizened lines disappeared.

When they had finished, there was a great clearing of throats. The preacher, looking down solemnly on the grave, said: "Let us all offer a silent prayer, that her soul may take wing from these canyons and ranges, and on to the East where the dark clouds grow less, on to the King-Star whose brilliant aurora will cleanse and cure it from Earth's wandering wounds."

The heads were bent again, and as the prayer went out, an uncanny silence crept over the grave, a silence that the sea makes, sometimes to be broken by the leap of a fish or the spout of a whale.

This silence was broken by a laugh—a laugh

that had the ring of hate, lust, selfish greed, and madness—and a muddled articulation of oaths, and groans and epithets. Somewhere in the crowd a rifle spoke, and less than a quarter of a mile away the squaw man dropped into the brush to laugh no more. The ex-preacher raised his head and shouted, "Amen!"

They filled in the grave and tamped the loose soil around, that the coyotes might not burrow in and disturb her. The job was done without haste. As night shadows were gathering from the hills the miners walked away, not in the solemn way they had come, but with a quick, released step which led them to their saddle-horses and buckboards.

Like a charge of cavalry they were off; just dashed into the darkness. The bank robbers were ahead with a twelve-hour start. Two days later the president and the cashier were caught.

They weren't killed, sad to say, but brought back and made to stand trial. Nevada had no banking laws then. All that was required was a sign on the door: "Bank open from ten till three." Depositors had no protection. Paid for with the stolen money, the trial was put off from

time to time, and eventually thrown out of court.

The stranger had disappeared before the crash came, but soon afterwards he was heard from again. A desert editor, the newspaper said, had blown off his head with a sawed-off shotgun in a quarrel.

Lida was no more. Jackrabbits ran unhindered where the town had stood. The sagebrush began to grow over old and new graves alike. The hills lay pock-marked, pitted. The microbe, man, had gone somewhere to bore another hole. Time, with its charter of shifting sands, would fill the pits, and the afterglow of the early sixties would haze the hills in ether waves, and cover the spots with sage and shist.

The money-and-faith-robbed miners, I among them, scattered to new work. It was in Goldfield, shortly afterwards, that typhoid fever overtook me.

My doctor, who loved to needle himself with morphine, told me that I had had a narrow escape, and I believed him, judging from the trouble it was to learn to walk again. The Goldfield undertakers, too, were making inquiries about me, as to where I lived, and whether I had

much money. Ah, they throve there in those days! Five hundred dollars for a pine box. If the bereaved lived outside the state, and wanted the body, the lead casing around the coffin cost the price of a desert convoy.

By this time my wife had left me, and what money I had saved from the wreck in Lida went to pay doctor, druggist, and hospital. I had rheumatism, and limped around on a couple of canes. I had a great longing for the sea, and wanted to raise enough money to go back.

One of Tiffany's engineers examined a turquoise claim that I held, and approved it. Tiffany offered to buy on a bond sale, with a cash payment down of five thousand dollars. I was happy again, but not for long. Another crook crossed my trail, with falsified affidavits of previous ownership. That meant endless litigation. Tiffany wasn't buying a lawsuit, and my deal fell through.

I hobbled away to another camp, where I met the young man whom I had helped in Vancouver. He now assisted me back to strength, and sent me away with money in my pocket. I went straight to San Francisco, and feasted on Dunge-

ness crabs the night of my arrival. I went to bed, and felt the comfort of the clean linen sheets, so different from the dirty-dusty sage tuck blankets of the desert. I went to sleep with that sigh that brings relaxation like that of a child after a hard cry.

I was suddenly awakened, it must have been about five in the morning. The walls came tumbling down upon me, and it seemed that I would choke from lime dust, and loose bricks.

The door leading to the stairs was warped, and I could not open it. For a moment a prayer for deliverance flashed through my mind; then the sailor in me rebelled, and took command. I fished a chair out of a pile of bricks, and drove it through the door.

I dressed in the street that morning with thousands of people of both sexes.

In the face of the widespread disaster of the earthquake, private misfortune dwindled and for my own sake I do not regret the experience, hard as it was, nor even the total loss of all my papers and the treasured, useless, invaluable souvenirs of a lifetime in which hitherto there had not been overmuch of love and sweetness.

My life, like that of so many others, was spared only by a miracle. After doing what I could, through the next awful hours, to help in the rescue work, I booked passage North by steamer.

CHAPTER XXVII

WAYS AND MEANS. THE NOBLE ART OF SALESMANSHIP, WITH SOME HOUSE-TO-HOUSE PHILOSOPHY

A NIGHT or two later in Tacoma, I was sitting in the hotel lobby, wondering what to do next. A fat, flabby man, whose eyes, however, had a fine quality, squeezed himself into the chair alongside of me. We talked about the weather, and the people going past outside the window, and of the thousands who had suffered in the earthquake. Then he encouraged me to talk of myself, and I sketched my life for him in some detail, not cheerfully, I must admit.

He listened with interest, for he seemed to fancy me. When I had done, he asked: "What's the loss of a few dollars?" And unbuttoning his coat, and exposing a large morocco-bound book; "It amounts to nothing. Why, you haven't found yourself yet, that's the trouble. I was

forty years old before I found myself, and the result is that the last year I made twenty thousand dollars, and this year promises to double that amount."

He talked on, fairly bristling with energy.

"It's seldom that I do what I am going to do for you," he whispered; "I am going to take you along with me, and show you how to pile up dollars."

"Doing what?" I asked. I'll grant him that he had me swamped in dollars, and that I felt as nervous as any bank-robber.

He pulled out the morocco-bound book from his pocket. His eyes beamed with enthusiasm, and he forgot that we were not alone in the hotel. He slapped the book down on the arm of his chair and shouted:

"This is what we get our money from. The 'Student's Reference,' in three volumes, sold in every home in the U. S. for nineteen dollars and seventy-five cents! Children knock you down in the street for it. Women weep for the privilege of buying it from you! Five dollars commission on each set, and ten sets a day you sell! Four hours work! Three hundred dollars a

week! Friends by the thousands! Crazy about you! Too many! A wonderful business!"

Giving me no time even to catch my breath, he jumped to his feet, as he went telling me to meet him the next morning at nine o'clock. Then he trotted rapidly off to the elevator, from which, as it whisked him out of sight, he called a final "Good night!"

I went to bed, oblivious of rheumatism and earthquake, to dream of treasure, and thousands of friends.

Two hours later, the hotel being cleared of the mold of the day, and the yawning clerks and the busy night-porter willing me off to bed, I went, my mind still foggy, as it had been these two hours, with books and greenbacks, and the hope of getting back again to ease and self-respect.

I met the book man at nine o'clock the following morning. He had lost none of the charm of the night before. We flew to talking; and I went to work under his instructions, selling books.

For three months I was a successful book agent, making money easily. But as if some fluency lay in money so easily gained, it went as if it had no value, and seemed to lack the

power to accumulate. This appealed to my sailor's superstition. By what right, I thought, did I assume control of my fellow beings, to the extent that they must get something they did not want, for which they must deprive themselves materially? How could I deny responsibility, shrugging it onto them for being so easily dominated? Was it not a kind of black art that I was practising? God forbid, I thought, and gave it up.

As I look back on it now, I still can see it no other way, for the rich and the poor were helpless in our hands. Our arguments flowed over them, covered them, swamped them, sucked them under—and they were gone, as if their money were ours, and not theirs.

So I went back to “that old devil, sea” again, to clean soiled hands with Stockholm tar.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FAREWELL TO AN OLD FRIEND OF THE EARLY
DAYS—AND AU REVOIR TO THE FIRST, AND
ONLY FRIEND OF ALL THE YEARS.
RATHER A SAD CHAPTER, TAKE
IT ALL IN ALL

ONE day, shortly after I left the book business, I was in a small town on the Puget Sound, looking for a ship. Strolling around, I was attracted by a crowd in front of a general store. Policemen were running and women screaming, and with one thing and another there seemed, for a small town, to be no end of excitement.

Always being of a curious nature, I hurried with the rest to the store, elbowing my way through the crowd as I went, in order not to miss the finish, whatever it might be. As I passed the outer noisy strata of human beings, and penetrated the last hushed edge before a clearing on the sidewalk, I saw a tall and skinny policeman

stretched out there bleeding, while triumphantly posed over him, making no effort to get away, and drunk as drunk could be, stood none other than Liverpool Jack.

He was bare-headed, his coat was off, and his shirt was torn to ribbons. His hairy bare arms showed beautiful tattooed ladies, ships, anchors, and flags of many nations. For a moment, at what one might call this "show down" of emotion, I felt the distance I had traveled mentally and materially since Liverpool Jack and I had been mates. I was no better than I had been, but whether it was a feeling of difference caused by having had money, or whether some real refinement had grown out of what I had known at home—anyway, I shrank from the sight of him. Then my loyalty shamed me, and I became alert, as always, to help him out.

Fortunately, I did not have a chance to speak to him then; for three strapping policemen, who were armed to handle him and me, grabbed hold of him, and putting the "twisters" on his wrist, led him off to the lockup. He didn't see me, and I didn't want him to until I had time to find the best way to get him out.

While the crowd helped the policeman to his feet, the man who owned the general store told me about the fight. It seems that the "cop" had imprudently undertaken to arrest Liverpool Jack single-handed when he found him drunk in the street. He was promptly thrown through the window of the general store, where Jack's follow-up work did all possible damage to a loose and innocent display of potatoes, apples, cereals, and tobacco.

The store-keeper was mourning his loss, and damning the inefficient Limb of the Law. Who was to pay him for his goods? he whined. Who, indeed? For, speeding away to the jail, I managed for a two hundred dollars' fine, to get Jack released. And before the poor store-keeper had time to figure the damage we were out of town, and on our way to Tacoma.

There we had to wait a few days for a ship. I was now going to take him to sea with me, as I feared to leave him. But one night he got away from me, and I never again saw him alive. Next day his body was found on the railway track, mutilated by a train, and some one who had been drinking in the saloon where Jack had

been testified that he had heard him say that since there seemed to be no one to fight with he guessed he might as well pull a few trains off the track.

Probably this statement was not true, but it was certainly characteristic of the man the poor dead creature had been, and of the savage set to his jaw. Even in death he seemed not to have found peace; I must remember him as he looked then, and be sorry that, at the end, it had to be the terrible scrappiness of him that dominated, and not the real tender-heartedness and manliness that I knew so well lay beneath. Poor, poor, lonesome Liverpool Jack!

With the last of my book-agent money I had him buried, and not in the potter's field. Let us hope that the better part of him found its innocent release, and is going on, sailing oceans, splicing ropes, and tattooing other souls of fighting children of the sea.

For two years now I rambled the oceans, being mate, and sometimes master, of fine ships, almost of my choice—for I was seasoned, and knew something of men, and was free from that in my youth which had been unreliable.

Yet something made me weary of the sea, perhaps that very fact that youth was gone, even to Liverpool Jack—the connecting-link; and that the sea, however much she may still the thirst for change, is no husbinder of men's strength against the future, and has no care for their material provision.

The slow saving of a seaman's wages was a process untried by me ever, and my conception of provision for the future was gold. Gold in the hills, waiting somewhere for me. Somewhere opportunity for rest, and a home. More and more my thoughts returned to Ireland: to go back there with even a little stake, to see my mother; to buy a little piece of land near her and work it; to have my dog, and my horse, and my chickens and my pigs—and perhaps some day, when the Dead Past should have buried its Dead, some day, a son of my own to raise, fearless of me and of the world.

"Simply a sailor's dream," you, reader, who now perhaps know enough of me to despair of me, will say. Ay, simply a sailor's dream! Simply a sailor's dream!

For although I knew well enough that thoughts

of home were ever bound up in my mother, and although I knew well enough that had I not been stubbornly foolish I could have been back in Ireland this many a year, and prosperous, and a delight to her, yet never had it occurred to me that she might grow other than I had known her years ago—that there might not be plenty of time; that she might be nearing the end of the span.

So the news that she was dead found me digging, and Gold turned hard and lifeless before my eyes, and Love sat there beside me, bleeding. Blinded by sorrow I went a-roving, and the steep braes knew me. I picked and dug and washed, from habit, for good luck meant only food to me now. Often there was no food, nor even water, for that matter, although when thirst gets you, you cannot will to die, however cheaply you may hold your life.

And so six years went by, and the loneliness of the mountains healed me; and I was a better man, but very solitary.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE OLD MAN AND THE VIOLET ROCK, THE GUARDIANS AND THE STORY OF THE OLD MAN'S LOVE

I WAS mining where the Snake River makes a boundary line between Idaho and Oregon. From seventy miles away came the report of a big gold strike. I lost no time in getting there. It turned out to be a fluke, based on the finding, by a prospector, of a few outcroppings of gold.

I went away as fast as I had come. This time I took a trail that led me about a hundred miles away from the railroad, into a country where there was no mining, and little of anything else. What subconscious impulse took me there I cannot say.

My new trail led me to the Owyhee, a long and crooked river. It plows through deep gorges, and again spreads out where the canyons are wide. On its banks are small patches of fertile

land. It was on one of these patches that I met The Old Man of Violet Rock.

I had been traveling all day long without seeing anything human. I was hungry, and my horse was tired. There was a high mountain on the western side of the river that lay hooded in mourning. A lava cap fitted snugly over it; the evening sun seemed perched on its top.

To the east of me, and the side on which I was traveling, a steep table-land broke off, leaving a perpendicular sandstone precipice of a thousand feet or more. Here were caves, many of them large, and semicircular in shape.

There issued from them a peculiar kind of odor. It may have been that wild animals carried their plunder there to appease their hunger in peace, or perhaps it may have been the decaying of an ancient race.

The sun had rolled over behind the lava-cap now, and as I rode on a squeaky groaning startled my horse. I dismounted, and leading him, walked ahead. It wasn't over three hundred yards to the river. I dreaded even this short walk, for being in the month of July, snakes with many rattles challenged me as I wended my

way through the sage-brush, in the direction of the groaning.

It was an old water-wheel, run by the current, laboring furiously lifting the water to a flume. My horse nickered, and I felt happy. We both knew that not far from that water-wheel there must be some sort of a home, where we could rest and feed.

Following the water ditch a quarter of a mile I came to The Lava Rock. Anyone would have stopped to admire it, it looked so unusual, large, isolated, lying there on the bank of the river. A net-wire fence stood around three sides of it, and the fourth side faced the river. It would have been hard for anyone to reach it from this side, where the drop to the water was a sheer twenty feet.

While my horse nibbled on a bunch of withered bunch-grass, I leaned against the fence and looked in. There must have been half an acre in the enclosure—the rock took up one third of that. It stood high, peaked and irregular, with a broad base. From its summit one could command a far view up and down the river. What attracted me most to it was the quantity of beau-

tiful flowers that grew around and over it, startlingly colorful in the dusk, a lovely deep blue. Violets in bunches, in sods, in great masses, over the rock and down its sides, in fissures somehow filled with soil, and glorying in release from desert barrenness.

Grass, too, grew on the rock, neatly trimmed grass, forming a little path clean over the top of it. It is hard to describe the impression of peace and sentiment that this sight created in me.

While I still lingered, trying to trace some reason for this blooming memorial to geological ages, an old man mounted the rock from the other side, and came over the violet and grassy path toward me.

"Good evening, sir," said I, instinctively taking off my hat to the bent and venerable figure, as he stood gazing intently at me with eyes whose piercing quality was as yet untouched by time. His white hair was blowing with the wind, his shoulders were stooped like the slant of a tree that has grown always away from some hard prevailing wind.

"Good evening," he replied, in a voice whose

tonelessness betokened one who talked but little with his fellow-men. He looked at me without either surprise or interest, as one whose duty to humanity will soon be done.

"If you want food and rest overnight," he continued, pointing to a little-used trail along the river bank, "follow the irrigation ditch down a hundred yards. Then take the path to the left till you come to the barn, feed your horse, and come back here for your supper."

I thanked him, and followed his directions. The barn was small and shut in by leafy mulberry trees. I fed the horse, and, being hungry, hurried back. The old man was standing inside the fence by the rock. He held a pan in his hand, and at my approach handed it out to me over the fence saying:

"Help yourself to what you want, then wash the pan and leave it here. Here is coffee, too," and he handed me a cup of real china, strangely out of keeping with the desert feast of beans and pork and biscuit in the rough pan. Seeing my thought in my face, he said quite simply, "Yes, I prefer a cup for coffee," and left me to my own conclusions.

He went to the corner of the fence, and looked down the river. So great was his dignity that I should not have thought of questioning him, but I could not but wonder at his choosing this apparently solid rock as a place to which to bring warm food. He had not carried the pan far. He must have a fire and a house somewhere. But where? Evidently not inside the rock, and nowhere else visible.

As if to put a stop to my thoughts, he turned back and began to question me. "Why did you come this way?" he asked.

I told him that I had not had the slightest idea where I was going, that I simply wanted to ramble.

"How would you like to work for me a week or two?"

"What doing?" I asked, munching the beans.

"I have some hay to be cut and stacked, and there's work to be done on the water-wheel."

"All right," said I. "I'll do it. How about the pay?"

"I'll pay you whatever is right," said he, glancing around suspiciously at the rock.

There was no more said about pay, nor did I

doubt his good faith. I finished eating, and washed the pan, handing it back to him across the fence.

"What a wonderful place for a house there in the rock," I said, tentatively.

He turned savagely upon me, his whitish bushy beard seeming to stick out in protest at my profanation.

"You sleep in the barn," he cried. "You do work for me; you can't come inside this fence. Good night!"

He went around the rock, and whether away by the other side, or into the rock itself, I had no means of telling. Nor did I find out for many days, so secret was he about it all.

What did he have in the rock, to guard so carefully that he would not even let me in? I asked myself, as I found my way to the barn. Could it be that in his rambles through the hills he had found gold? He seemed sane enough, and yet his eyes had that odd and fiery glow which I had noticed.

Commonplace thoughts would not set me at ease. I seemed to grasp the wildest imaginations about him and the rock. I wasn't afraid,

and yet there was a strangeness about the whole thing, rock, violets, and man, that made me sleepless where I lay in my blanket in the hay. The slightest sound startled me; the stamp of a horse brought me to my feet, the rustling of the mulberry leaves wrought a shiver through me, and for that night, and for the nights that followed, I was haunted by the strange things about me.

I must have been in the barn about four hours that first night when the noise of a falling tree scared the very wits out of me. Surely there wasn't enough wind to blow it down. As I listened, trying to quiet my heart, there came to my ears the sound of the groaning water-wheel, laboring away in the current of the river.

Frightened as I was, I opened the barn door and walked out and around the building. Then, as if to give myself courage, I shouted:

"What the devil's going on around here?"

Instantly there came an answering sound.

"Ka-plunk! Ka-plunk! Ka-plunk!"

I laughed aloud, went into the barn, slammed the door, and crawled into the saddle-blanket, but not before I had cursed the beavers of the Owyhee River!

When I went out the next morning the sun was up, but the rays had not yet reached the canyon. The old man was out on the rock, watering his violets. He might have been some strange animal up there, sucking nectar from the hues of the purple glow. Indeed, he did look like an animal, hatless and shoeless as he was. His short, gnarly legs, his withered arms suggested the limbs of a vine.

That picture of him there, perched upon the rock amidst the tender profusion of blooms, lingers with me as vividly as the memory of my old music master. As I watched him, he picked a bunch of violets and disappeared around the rock. Who could the flowers be for? Did he have a wife? Again my thoughts ran rampant, worse than the night before. Curiosity, making the adventure worth while, would eventually find the secret of the Violet Rock.

I had breakfast from over the fence that morning, and for ten mornings after. Biscuits, bacon, or salt pork and beans, and black coffee were mostly the fare. I cut the hay, nine acres in all. The old Buckeye mowing machine was as ragged and worn as its owner. The sickle had to be filed

many times a day. The horses were as mysterious, too, as they could be. They'd work steadily for awhile, then refuse to work entirely, fall to eating, and lie down all harnessed, in the tall alfalfa. I'd just sit there atop of the old mower and whistle till they got ready to work again; then, without warning, with a simultaneous lunge they would be up and off, with me hard put to it to hold them. The old man would not allow me to carry a whip. The horses were old, he said; he had had them many years, and no one must be unkind to them.

So it took me three days to mow the hay, and I had ample time for amusement between times. There was real enjoyment in killing rattlesnakes. I carried a pitchfork for those of them that the sickle missed. It seemed that to me wherever I turned I saw or heard a rattler. To say that they didn't have me afraid would not be telling the truth. I was as nervous and shifty as a squirrel.

In the evenings I tried to draw out the old man to talk about himself. He always evaded conversation of any kind; seldom he moved away from the rock, and never when I was around.

And at the end of the tenth day I was as far from knowing anything about him as I had been at the end of the first.

One afternoon when I had about finished stacking the hay a thunderstorm came up the river, bringing rain and lightning. I hurried for shelter to the barn. As I ran the noise of the thunder in the canyon was deafening. I was soaked. Before I reached the barn lightning struck the lava-capped mountain, and released great boulders which came plunging down into the river. No snake would have had time to strike me before I gained the barn, and my snorting horse and I found reassurance with each other, and agreed that Violet Rock was no happy place for us.

The storm increased. It wasn't past three o'clock, yet it felt as if night was setting in. I felt danger around me, and the sailor in me drove me again to the open. I ran for the rock, feeling that the old man might be glad of my company as I of his.

Within a hundred yards of the rock I stopped, and stood, forgetting myself at the sight of him. Through the gaps of spilling cloud-water I saw

him standing on the rock, bareheaded, his long white hair lying like loose rope-ends about his head. He was talking. His voice reached me in mumbles. He was addressing someone or something that was hidden by the ridge of drooping violets.

A thought flashed through my mind with the quickness of the forked lightning that sizzled overhead. It was gold he had there, gold to glitter in the soft rainwater, aged gold to an aged Idolater!

As I stood there watching him, with the water making pools around my feet, I was seized with hot resentment and disgust at his daring, there in the open, under the eye of the angry gods of the elements, to obtrude the little matter of his greed!

"Shame," I cried aloud; "shame, shame!" And I ran again to the barn to get away from him, thankful in my heart that gold had never meant that much to me.

When the sun came out I wrung out my clothes, and hung them out to dry; then in clean things I went out into the clean world and found ripe

mulberries to feast upon cleansingly. Then I strolled off to the sandstone bluffs and wandered in and out of caves where once the aborigines had made their homes.

The sun had set, and the shadowed noise of creeping things stirred me barnwards. I didn't go after my supper that night, nor did he come after me to get his. I rolled into my saddle blanket and went to sleep, hoping that my impressions of him were wrong, and resolved to leave there in two or three days more, in any case.

The old man awoke me in the morning. He stood over me crying excitedly, "Get up, get up! The dam has broken; the wheel has stopped. We must get to work at it right away."

The breakwater that forced the current from the center of the river to the side of the bank where the wheel turned, was broken by a freshet from the storm. While I was filling and carrying sacks of sand to mend the break, the old man was busy working at the wheel, nailing loose boards and tightening nuts here and there on it.

I paid little attention to him, nor did I know

that my work on the breakwater was slowly driving the current under the wheel, where it might start to turn at any time.

That was just what did happen. The water-wheel was started going by the force of the current under it. The old man, who was hanging on top of it wrenching at a bolt, fell ten or twelve feet down into shallow water.

The noise of the splash hurried me to him. As I pulled him out blood was oozing from the side of his head. I thought that he was killed, and I was alarmed and sorry, for, though I have never stayed away from a fight, I would not be the cause of hurting anyone. With him in my arms—and he was heavy enough—I struggled to the top of the bank.

Gently I laid him down and felt his pulse. It was pitifully weak. His blood wet the grass. I tore off my shirt and bound his head. The sun was over the mountain-top sending down waves of heat. There was no shade this side the Violet Rock or barn, and big flies were buzzing around.

It was a long way to the rock, but then, I thought, suppose it was. The chance was that he was dying, and after all, why shouldn't he be

near the thing that he prized most in life, whatever it might be? I placed my arms around his hips, and slung his trunk to my shoulder. This way I carried him to the fence, found the gate, and squeezed him through; then eased him from my shoulder, and laid him down alongside the rock.

He groaned aloud, and made an effort as if to rise. Surely, I thought, he must have some kind of medicine around here that would help him to regain consciousness. Timidly, I don't know why, I started to explore the rock. I hunted around till I came to the river end of it. There I found a door.

Right in front of it was one of the largest rattlesnakes I have ever seen. Coiled he was, and ready for a fight. In an instant I forgot everything but that snake. I killed him, and made no mistake about it.

The door was fastened with a padlock, the frames set loosely in the lava rock. I jumped at it with both feet, being by this time so excited that I hardly knew what I was doing. The door flew off its frail hinges and daylight stopped short, at a curtain of inner gloom.

It was a cave, and dark. A hibernating odor seemed to come out of it. Ugh! what a place to live! I thought, for now I had no doubt that this was the old man's house. I took a step or two forward, then hesitated. Suppose there were snakes here, too? My flesh crept, and I retreated, only to be prompted to effort of some kind by a groan from outside.

My eyes being now used to the darkness, I could see a feeble ray of light proceeding from, I thought, a hole in the roof; and I went slowly and carefully ahead. Gradually things began to appear. The old man's bed, a chair, shoes underfoot, a box or two. No table as yet, no stove. But these I thought would reveal themselves when I should reach the shaft of light.

I kept moving on, but somehow I had a subconscious warning of evil. The hair on my head straightened out; I was as springy on my feet as a wildcat, and my heart gave me pile-driving blows. Then I reached a sort of inner room where the light fell, and my muscles set like the click of a bear-trap.

There, sitting on a chair by a table, was a skeleton! Evidently that of a woman, and

before it, upon the table, a great bunch of violets, still starry with morning dew. As my muscles gradually relaxed, I tiptoed closer.

It was plain that years had passed since her life went out. Much of the long black hair that had been hers remained. Time had not parched that; and in the sunken dried-up eyes, the parchment cheeks, the slender neck, the puckered, pointed mouth, was evidence that she may have once been beautiful.

One side of her face had been artfully turned to conceal the bones where the light leathery skin had fallen off. But the breast and ribs stood out starkly, and on the hands and arms skin still clung only in little patches. Around the waist was tucked a khaki shirt, and the legs and feet were, from where I stood, invisible.

I was overcome by a sort of spiritual reverence. The violets upon the table oozed the essence of purity, and I knew that I was standing within a shrine. My mind took a jump back past time.

It was easy to picture her, as she used to be. Young and beautiful, and full of life, dwelling with her lover in the sandstone caves above the river, grinding the nuts he brought her for food,

and decking out her hair for him in desert flowers.

Then something happened that killed the pleasure of the thought. The present came back upon me fully, and I was sorry for having intruded on the old man's love, and felt that I must hasten more than ever, to help him.

There was a sound behind me, somewhat louder than a baby makes when it breathes the sting of life into its delicate body. It was a cry that would have meant nothing to an unknowing listener, but for the one that uttered it it voiced life, death, passion, and despair.

There, through the darkness came the old man, staggering towards me. He spoke: "You thought I was dead, did you?" And now his voice seemed to fill the cave. "You have killed the snake that guarded me for years. Now you have found Her. You must go away and leave me. I ask of you not to tell. There is money under my pillow. Take what you think you have earned. But, go! go. Leave me, for I must be alone."

He knelt down by the skeleton as he spoke, and great tears ran down over the crusted blood upon his hand, unhindered. Without a word I

turned and walked out of the cave. Money I did not want from that old man. My misty eyes welcomed the sunshine.

I made for the barn, saddled my horse, and in deep inner quiet rode up the river, past the violets and the lone rock, past the old water-wheel that was groaning again with its laden buckets. Somehow this seemed to me a good omen. I felt that the old man would be all right again. But to this day I regret the killing of his snake, for a pet it really was, as I learned that afternoon. Feeling the lack of food, for I had not eaten since the noon before, I drew up at a little farm about twelve miles from the rock.

A Spaniard who lived there and ran a few sheep, told me about the snake—how the old man pulled out his fangs and made almost a companion of him, and how, when he rang a bell, the snake would come to him. Then, for the first time, I learned the old man's name: John Dakin, the Spaniard called him, and I realized that this was perhaps the first time that it never had occurred to me to try to find out someone's name. I had been content to think of him not otherwise than as the Old Man. The Spaniard said that he

had been educated, rich, and an archaeologist, and of his own accord had settled in these parts, and become a kind of hermit, of whom no one knew much, except that he was hard to speak to. Of the skeleton the Spaniard did not know, nor did I enlighten him.

CHAPTER XXX

TREATS OF FAIR PLAY, IN WHICH I LOSE ONE
HORSE; AND OF JUSTICE, IN WHICH I LOSE
ANOTHER; AND OF PITY, AND MY
ACQUISITION OF A THIRD

TWO days later I rode into Jordan Valley, Oregon, a cattle and sheep country. I came upon a little town in the heart of the valley, and remained there one day. It was a bad day for me, as I had to leave it on foot, having gambled my horse away.

An old prospector met up with me who had a horse as good as mine. Then it happened that a farmer drove into town with an old buckboard to sell. It was cheap; twelve dollars he asked for it. It was of no use to me, nor was it to the prospector, each of us having but one horse; and yet we both wished that we had it, for it was built for two horses, and roomy, and a stout hazel-wood neckyoke stuck out of the front of it.

"Well," said the prospector, as we felt of the spokes and examined the tires, "we both can't have it, but I have a scheme for one of us getting it."

"What's that?" I asked.

"Come over to the hall," he said; "there's dice there, honest dice."

"One flop out of the box," he continued. "Aces high. The high dice take both horses."

For a moment my mind wandered back to San Francisco, to my dice game of tops and bottoms, the last game I had played. I had learned a lot since then, but the thought of the comfortable buckboard, and the obvious honesty of the old prospector made me take another chance.

"Come on," said I. "It shall be as you say."

"You understand," he said, "the high dice takes both horses."

"How about the saddles?"

"Everything goes with the horse, and one flop out of the box settles it."

He shook first and rolled two fives.

I shook the dice, I blew on them; I swung them over my head three times. When they rolled onto the mahogany bar two threes were all I

had. I felt a bit sad when I saw the prospector drive away with the two horses hitched to the buckboard.

Then commenced a series of makeshifts for me. I footed it through the hills and desert, getting work where I could to earn enough money for a grubstake, always with the prospector's thought that sooner or later I should strike it rich.

In 1915 I discovered a ledge not far from Mono Lake, California. "At last!" I thought. "At last!"

The ledge had all the ear-marks of a mine. It was three feet across with perfect walls, dipping at an angle of forty-five degrees. The ore was free-milling, and although low grade on the surface it warranted work for depth to find rich values.

I set about with a feeling of optimism that I had never before experienced. For three months I worked and starved. I had to pack my grub sixteen miles, and poor grub it was. Coffee and very little bacon, and beans. Boiled beans for breakfast, cold beans for lunch, and warmed-over beans for supper. Day in and day out. No

one to speak to, no news, and no new thoughts. Only work.

Sometimes I would get discouraged. Then I would look at the beautiful sugar-loaf quartz in the ledge, and my eye would catch a little glint of gold. That was all I needed, to go at it again.

One morning I made up my mind to go away. I was a slave to a rainbow, and I knew it, and wanted to break away forever. I knew that if I ever did break away I should never return to this or any other mine unless in later years and sanely.

But even then it is doubtful if my resolution would have held had it not been for the farmer. Fate surely brought him that very morning mounted on one horse, and leading another, with rifles slung across the saddles.

"Have you a little time to spare?" he called, stopping at the mouth of my tunnel.

"Yes," I answered. "All kinds of time."

"Come along with me," he said. "Get on this horse, and take this rifle. Three Mexicans killed the sheriff this morning. We are out after them. Come on."

Before I had time to more than snatch my coat

we were off at a gallop down the mountain trail. I was never to see that mine again, and I suppose some other poor prospector got the benefit of my worn outfit: ragged blanket, blunt pick, beans, glittering hopes, and all.

CHAPTER XXXI

KILLING MEXICAN BANDITS

FOR about three miles we rode silently, the farmer well in the lead, and I holding to my horse as best I could, for he was anything but quiet. My mind was swirling as to what would be the outcome before the sun should go down.

We reined up in a little meadow, where we were joined by four other horsemen, farmers also, one of them cross-eyed and carrying a Springfield rifle. I wondered how he could be useful on a man-hunt. How little use he was, was shown before the day was out, by the things he thought he saw, the times his gun nearly went off, and the one time that it did go off, when it was not his fault that no one was hurt.

"We're on their trail, boys," he shouted. "All we have to do is to keep after them." Then he went on to tell how they had broken into a

store and stolen arms, including a Savage rifle, which he had been told could kill a man at a distance of two miles. And that these murdering Mexicans were Pancho Villa's soldiers, revolutionists, who had crossed the line into California.

We scoured the hills, and about four o'clock came on them where they lay behind some fallen timber. They were full of fight, and opened fire on us without warning. The first shot killed the horse upon which I was riding, the second took a sliver out of the cross-eyed farmer's chin—which was a pity, in that it hurt him, but undoubtedly a blessing in that it took his mind off his gun.

It seemed that we were to be at the mercy of the Mexicans. Everything was in their favour, with us in the open and no shelter within reach.

But it so happened that two of our posse were Spanish-American War veterans, and good shots, whose presence saved me, at least, to write this story. The moment that one of the "hombres" raised his head above the fallen timber to shoot again, one of the soldiers silenced him for all time; and so it went with the second and the **third**, without further casualty to us.

We tied them onto saddles and packed them to the coroner, who received ten dollars from the county for pronouncing them dead. The road-house at the head of Mono Lake, where the sheriff had been killed, was crowded with people waiting for news of the desperadoes.

Farmers' wives whose dear ones had joined in the hunt were there, anxious for news of their husbands; sweethearts of the dead sheriff hung around the corpse with wet eyes; the old widow whose house, barn, and stacks of hay the Mexicans had burned was there too, and wailing her loss.

Altogether it seemed a fine chance to the prosecuting attorney to square himself with the public forever; so he ordered drinks for the crowd, and addressed them imposingly, telling them everything they already knew, to their great interest.

Nevertheless, when the oration was over, and the dead sheriff had received more homage than ever he had had in life, and the Mexicans had been sufficiently reviled, I emerged into the open air thoughtfully.

It was the farmers I was thinking of, and their

courage, going off that morning of their own accord, leaving their wives and children, their stock and growing crops, to which they might never return, to do duty out there; the duty that all right-thinking men owe to civilization—the performance of the laws of justice, derived from usage of the ages.

CHAPTER XXXII

ONE WHO SANG

AS I walked along that September night thinking of the good and the bad that is in all of us I heard away off in the distance the sound of a banjo. It seemed cheerful in view of the sadness I had just left, and I turned towards it, walking along the lake.

Now the sound became plainer, and I could hear a man's voice, old and cracked, singing an ancient rebel song:

“When first I joined the army

My mother said to me,

‘Come back, you red-headed son-of-a-gun

And brand the brindle-steer.’”

Words and music came back to me, re-echoed from a small island in the lake, and I followed them to the smudge of a fire where the old man sat.

Two youngsters were sitting with him, and he

was entertaining them, more, it seemed, for the love of his song, than for the sake of their proffered bottle.

They made me welcome, and the old man continued his songs. He had a violin with which he alternated the banjo. Then he would tell stories about all sorts of things, for he had had a queer and roving life. He had been, it seemed, a traveling circus man for years and years, and able to do a little something anywhere he might be needed.

The young men went off somewhere when they had heard enough, and I was about to start away, being drawn by a cat-like feeling for the little camp. I turned to say good-by to the old man.

"Where do you sleep?" I asked.

"Oh," he answered, "I sleep here in the brush. That is, when I can find my blankets."

"Do you always go to bed drunk?" I asked, laughing.

The old fellow fell to sobbing, and I, thinking that he was none too sober then, was about to turn away, when he cried:

"No, I don't go to bed drunk. I am almost

blind. I'm hard put upon once the sun sets. When he shines in the sky I'm all right."

It was my part now to show him sympathy, and I questioned him. He told me that he sang, fiddled, and played the banjo for the food and the few dimes the people gave him.

"No one will give me work any more. They don't want me. Why should they? I'm of no use in the world. I should die damn it! Yes, I should die. But"—for his pessimism, never too strong, had run itself out—"I *could* work, I know I could. I'm a tough old geezer yet."

I gathered wood and rekindled the fire, and he and I talked until Mars lit up the dawn sky. It was a strange thing, meeting this old man, and it had far-reaching consequences for me and for others who didn't know me any better than the loons who cawed on Mono Lake.

At any rate, I was moved that night as I had never been moved before, perhaps by the stories of his youth which raised in me memories of my own; perhaps by the aged helplessness of him, which suggested that duty whose fulfilment had been stopped by my mother's death. I almost thought that some unseen power was

bidding me take charge of him, so blind and helpless, and at the mercy of the passers-by.

When daylight came I saw his eyes. Pitiful they were, like those of a blind dog, with sagging under-lids, and a lifeless look. But one was a little better than the other, and I felt that for that one there was hope, could I but get him to a doctor.

CHAPTER XXXIII

OLD AUSTEN SEES DAYLIGHT, I DO, TOO, AND SHE DOES, TOO

IT was four hundred miles to an eye specialist, eighty to the railroad, and I had nineteen dollars in my pocket. Nevertheless, I made the first move by hiring a horse from a farmer for ten dollars and the promise to send him back from Bishop.

I launched the old man—Austen was his name, and seemed to be all the name he had—upon him, with a blanket over the horse's bare back, and the banjo and violin tucked each under an arm.

They laughed at us as we passed the hotel where the sheriff's funeral was about to take up, and we laughed back; Austen because he laughed at himself as much as anyone could laugh at him, and I because the air was sweet, and I had something different to do, and someone else than myself to plan for. So we jogged off through the desert, and the dust got into our throats, and

the coyotes howled at us, and still the sun shone and the firelight sparkled, and we laughed.

Four days we marched, stopping for coffee, and Van Camp's pork and beans, and the oats which I carried on my back for the horse. It was a bit hard on the old man going down the steep hills—going up he didn't mind—and he was constantly surging forward onto the horse's neck, damning him for not holding his head up.

On the afternoon of the fourth day we came to Bishop, and I hunted the town to get up a subscription to send the old man to Los Angeles. Heartless the people there seemed, and heartless they were. They were certainly not interested in blind men, and urged me to send him to the poor farm, if I could manage to get him in.

I arranged with a cattle man to take the horse back to Mono Lake, and after a night in the town and a real feed, we set out on towards Death Valley, where I knew that I could get work to keep us both, and eventually to send Austen to Los Angeles.

We walked about eight miles that morning. The old fellow was getting tired, and we sat down to rest. On the slope of the hill, less than

a mile away, stood a modern farm house, different from any other else in the valley. The road up to it was graded and wide; young trees lined in uniform growth stood at the sides; in the fields alfalfa grew, and beautiful Percheron mares were running and playing with their stocky colts. Jersey cows with fawn-like limbs nibbled at the grass. And an old Indian, tall and noble-looking, stood, like a statue, with a shovel in his hands, watching the tiny irrigation-ditches which, if untended, were so tricky with the unset soil of that country.

A white mongrel dog who was out chasing rabbits saw us, and ran to us, barking and wagging his tail. I patted him, and he licked the old man's hands; then barking again in his friendly way he ran into his home-road and stood, with head over his shoulder, as if urging us to come.

"That dog is our first friend in five days, Austen," said I, "and I'll bet that his master is kind and considerate too. Let us go up."

We did go, and we found a child of four or five years playing on the lawn, and a woman in her early thirties unharnessing a horse.

"Let me do that," said I, quite naturally.

"You don't look as if you knew how," said she, wickedly.

Of course I knew how, and I took matters into my own hands at once. "Where does the harness go?" I asked, paying no attention. "First door to the right as you go into the barn, horse in the last stall, halter hanging on the iron hook," said she, walking off quite unconcernedly, but, I noticed, with a twinkling eye.

"Frances," she called to the child, "come here and show this man how to feed Slim, and water him."

The child came fearlessly, and I, who thought it was a joke, found it was no joke at all. Several work-horses were in the barn, finishing their dinner, and the little girl told me all about them, their names, and how they were fed.

We came out from the barn hand in hand—and although she is now almost as tall as I, she still gives me my orders when she sees fit.

The mother was standing talking to Austen, and I saw already that she was in full possession of her facts. As I looked at her I thought that she was aged for her years; that her strong frame

was accustoming itself to work it had not been used to, and that the serious face which belied the smiling eye, hid a considerable knowledge of loneliness and misery at first hand.

Later I found that this was true; that she had had a life as changeable, as full of adventure, and disappointment for her, as mine had been for me. That now she was hanging to this ranch, which she had been forced to mortgage heavily, in the forlorn hope of selling it at a time when the war had driven value out of land everywhere. People were keeping their cash, not knowing what would happen, and she felt that if she could not sell she must leave the place she had redeemed from the desert, and start another trail.

Partly dependent as she was—for she was a “remittance-man”—she could not oblige herself to lose the free feel of the desert in any provided shelter. So, I being lonely too, and without pretense and as we understood each other, we agreed some months later to be married; and were eventually married, to our satisfaction, but not without trouble, which began to brew that night at Mono Lake.

While she fed us—and it seemed that we could never stop eating of ranch food that was really fit for workingmen—she talked to us, and we consulted about Austen's eyes. She seemed at once to feel that it was as much her responsibility as it was his, or mine.

"I can give him work about the house for a while," she said, "until we can arrange for the doctor in Los Angeles. That part of it I will answer for, if you will take him down there. When he gets through, I will let him irrigate for a month, to give him some money to go away with. More than that I cannot promise, for I expect to rent the ranch this winter, and move away."

"You are the trouble for me," she continued; "for you are a sailor and an Irishman, and I never hire sailors nor Irishmen. Sailors always want their own way, and Irishmen are here one minute and get angry and leave the next."

I thought it better to dispute the premise than to argue the conclusion, which seemed to be based on experience, and was certainly the truth; so I denied that I was either a sailor or an Irishman.

"I didn't suppose you'd admit it," she said, speculatively. "They never do. But you are both. I know you are a sailor because you walk like one, and always will; and an Irishman because that is written all over you."

In vain I protested, wretchedly, too; for I saw that she meant what she said. I told her what I could do, and how well I could do it. I promised that the best man she had should never be able to set a pace for me. Finally tears came into my eyes, and a lump into my throat. Just then I saw the little girl, standing by.

"You tell her," I said, huskily, and that settled it.

I do believe that for a month I worked as I had never worked before, and I must say that I was driven without mercy. But I was well fed, and had a little house to myself; and the child, at least when she was not busy with Austen, who fascinated her completely, was kind to me.

My month was up, and it was pay-day. I was called into the house and the little girl told me that her mother was going to Bishop, and wanted me to go with her.

We went in the mountain-wagon, the child on

my knees, her mother doing the driving; for which, I may say, to this day she is badly lacking in confidence in me. She told me, when she started, that she was going to take me to buy a few things, because she had arranged for Austen to go down to the hospital the next day, and for me to go and stay there with him.

I looked down at my worn boots, for I had been grubbing sage-brush and digging ditches.

"Yes, I know," she said, catching the look. "We are going to get them."

The thought of anyone going to help me buy my shoes, who had had no one to take a single thought for me for so long, moved me so that I could hardly speak. We did go to buy them. We bought other things for Austen, had our pay besides, and started south on the train next day. She told me as we were going that she had sold a cow to make sure that she could send us!

At the hospital I found plenty to do with the old man. I held his hand while Dr. McCoy operated, stitching up the "curtain of film, not a cataract," as he described it, to either eyelid, and cheering him through the dismal days that followed.

Five days later the doctor took the poor old man's bandages off, and he nearly went wild. He could see perfectly with one eye, and almost as well with the other. He shouted and sang, and kissed the nurses. He was the circus man of the sixties again, and the "Brindle Steer" rang out, until he was stifled by an angry attendant.

The doctor would not take a cent for the operation. He was one of God's creatures, too.

CHAPTER XXXIV

FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES

AHAPPY greeting Austen and I got when we got back to the ranch. The lady's cow money seemed to have given her happiness in the joy brought to that old man, joy in having sight of the valleys, the green grass, and the mountain streams, and to look at his banjo and really see its strings.

That night in the sitting-room before the fire, he sang us songs of other days, of the musket and the broadsword, and his old young voice showed his happiness. He wound up in fine form with:

“When first I joined the army,
My mother said to me.”

Then :

“Come back, you red-headed—”

But here he broke down, and cried as he cried that first night, for the very opposite reason.

Austen was given a house to live in, and work to do to start him on his way to the remnant of a relation whom he still had in the East.

I did not linger on. I told her that I was going, that my mind was made up. Either she should marry me at Christmas in Los Angeles, where I was going to look for work, or I should never see her again. And right there, because she said she would marry me, did the vicious chain of consequences to which I have alluded before, begin to show themselves.

I went to Los Angeles, getting into touch with what seemed to be an excellent mining proposition, a new town, which afterward failed at the threat of impending war. At Thanksgiving I returned to the ranch for a few days and found that she had written to her father, and received his reply. I was a fortune-hunter, and an "impossible person."

Once there was a cobbler in Michigan. He made a standard shoe that stood the test of time, and he had made standard shoes for many years. One day he was working on a pair, when the mail brought him a letter from his brother in California asking him for money. He was so disturbed

by the letter, that his mind wandered from the shoes, and a little variation in one shoe occurred. A customer in New York who always bought these shoes happened a little later to be in need of a pair. He bought the very shoes that the cobbler had made when he received his brother's letter.

He wore them out on a rainy day. They were not quite stout, owing to the defect in one of them, and the water leaked in and gave the man pneumonia. When he was recovering, his wife asked him to hang a picture, and he got upon a chair to do it. The shoe had never quite regained its shape, like the other shoe, his foot turned in it, he was thrown to the ground and broke his leg. So did the cobbler's brother in California affect the purchaser in New York.

So did my impulsive sacrifice for Austen cause the utmost disturbance thousands of miles away, to which even broken bones would have been preferable.

How was I, who had always worked hard and never valued money, going to prove that the prospects of this lonely lady and her people were of no interest to me? Or that, although I had no

money, I had some valuable assets of experience, and honesty and heart? It simply couldn't be done.

So, when a member of the family appeared with a written questionnaire, what could I do but answer him as I did? I said:

"I shall not answer these questions. If you want to look me up, here are the addresses of my enemies. Go to them, for my friends will not interest you."

Surely enough he did, and heard the worst of me, and much that wasn't true, and my Lady must needs pay her price, too, for the rescue of a blind man and the sale of a cow!

We had rather a tumultuous two years, from which we emerged with great faith in each other, and little in those who would have kept us apart. That was while the war was at its height; small passions mounted into great ones everywhere, and many small fry perished.

April 12, 1917, we took a street-car from Los Angeles to Santa Ana, and were there married by a justice of the peace, whose witnesses were vital to us but for an instant, and then passed forever from our lives.

THE LAST CHAPTER

OCEAN ECHOES

WE had come into the war now, and as anxious as I was to do something to help, I found little encouragement in the West. Wherever I made application, the response was: "Wait, wait, don't be in a hurry."

The same thing had happened to me in 1898. I left a ship then and trained for our war with Spain three months at my own expense, only to be told that Uncle Sam had more volunteers than he could use.

This time the excitement grew upon me so strongly that I decided I would get at least three thousand miles nearer; and in May, 1918, we left a little place we had rented, and my wife started for New York. There I joined her a month later, and went right to work as Superintendent of Deck Rigging in the Port Newark Shipyard, while she worked in an ammunition plant.

It seemed that Old Ocean was once more taking care of me. I was at home with masts and booms, anchors and cables, life-boats, steering gear and compasses. I worked there until the next summer.

Then came a period of idleness, waiting for another position, and I did a good deal of reading. Stories of the sea, some were. I criticized them to myself. Those writers who really knew the sea seemed to be self-conscious, sometimes; to think that they must use the ocean as scenery to decorate their plot. Those who did not know the sea, seemed to want to take awful chances with the truth. Then I got hold of the "Trawler," and it got hold of me. Why shouldn't I try to write? I thought. I had things to say and no one would sneer at the simplicity of an old sailor.

I wrote my first book; and the critics received "The Flying Bo'sun" kindly. They said the most heartening thing—that it rang true. We can't all visualize the colors on the horizon, and some of the things that have happened to me may seem impossible to a reader. But when we fall a-yarning it is hard to stop, and we

like our listeners to be awake and calling "Bravo" at the end.

So this tale is drawing to its close, and I must not drift, but drop my anchor where the holding-ground is good, and enter my ship in her port of discharge.

In the summer of 1921 I went to sea again, not as a sailor before the mast this time, nor as a mate, nor a master, but as a passenger bound for South America. When the Ambrose Channel was cleared, and the old Scotland Light-ship bore away on the starboard beam I felt the motion of the Sea of my youth. As the land faded away, and the sky and sea closed in around me, a sadness came over me. Something was wrong, something different from other times.

It wasn't like being at sea at all. There wasn't a roll out of the ship, the black smoke that belched out of the smoke-stacks seemed unreal, the bulwarks were far away above the floating water. There were no clanks from blocks nor flop of sails, no running to and fro of naked feet. All that reminded me of the old days were the ship's bells. Their tone was the same, and faith-

fully to their age-long responsibility, they chimed the pure Time of the Sun.

As we wore away south, familiar things showed up again. The blackfin shark still prowled across the ocean's surface; there was the dolphin and the flying-fish, the whale and his enemy the thrasher. Porpoises still played around the bows.

The clouds still had their old-time glow, the sunsets fired the skies as in other days. The night skies, it seemed to me, were more beautiful. Old, familiar friends I could see up there, almost always clear of clouds, the Southern Cross, with its two pilot stars pointing to it sparkling with beauty brighter than all the rest of that starry field.

One night when the noisy passengers had gone to their bunks to sleep, I went forward to the forecastle head, up to the eyes of her, where I could see out upon the ocean unobstructed. I was alone there, everything mortal was behind me. A gentle breeze blew across the bows. So cool and soothing it felt! I was not conscious of the steamer I was on. I felt the influence of the years that were back of me.

As I stood there holding the jack-pole, gazing out into the bright night, ships, misty yet not dim, sailing-ships of every sort, with every sort of canvas, sailed up from the lee. They had memories' sails bellied out to the wind. I knew them all, one after the other, their hulls, black or white, their rigs, their painted ports. Of course I knew them, and their scars and the queer things about them, and called them each by name.

How fiery the water looked as it dashed over their bows, how gracefully they rode with the lee-rail low! Ships, real ships, the ships of other years!

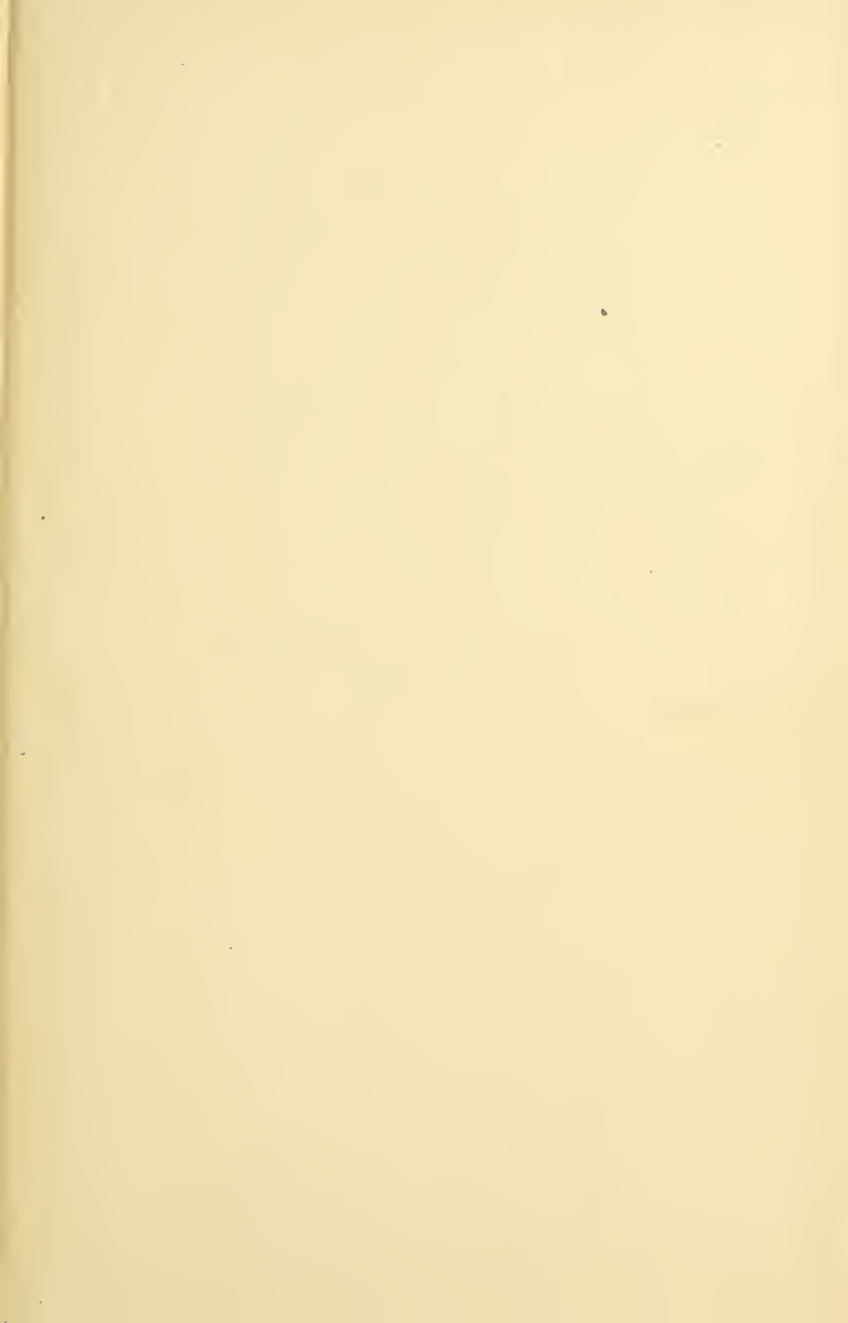
I was startled by a voice beside me:

"So you are up here, are you?"

"Yes, Captain," I replied absently, for I knew I had to let them go.

"You are not the only one," he said; "there are nights that I, too, come up here to watch the old ships go sailing by. The lookout in the crow's-nest up there never reports them. He doesn't see them. He is a modern sailor and has only eyes for smoke."

THE END



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